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Norton's Hand-Hewn History of Maine and Its Representative Town of Cumberland

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This publication is dedicated to the memory of
Floyd W. and Ada O. Norton
Born in Cumberland, Maine, on April 14, 1891, Floyd W. Norton was the son of Charles B. and Elizabeth H. Wilson Norton. He was the youngest of three siblings, the other two being Genevieve, born in 1886, and Ernestine, born in 1888. Their father was a sea captain and often away at sea, traversing the Atlantic Ocean and returning home with arresting tales of his adventures. Their mother kept house and provided a sense of stability, part of which stemmed from the exceptionally close relationship between the Wilson and Norton families.

Floyd's grandparents were David and Elizabeth Sweetser Wilson. Among their children were William E., born in 1849, and Elizabeth H., born in 1851. Sometime in the 1880s, Elizabeth married Floyd's father, Charles B. Norton, and her brother William married Emily H. Norton.

David Wilson, born in 1818, was a sea captain. In his manuscript _Norton's Hand-Hewn History of Maine and Its Representative Town of Cumberland_, Floyd relates his grandfather's early history:

> He was disheartened by life ashore, and so he headed for a life afloat. He walked to Portland, 12 miles, sought out a sea captain on a wharf and asked him for a job. He got it, but not as a sailor as he hoped, but as a ship's cook. But he was game, and took it. For the year he served as cook he soaked up considerable know-how.

The captain of the ship befriended David and, sensing his potential, sent him to school with his own sons in Orrington. David eagerly seized this remarkable opportunity and made the most of those two years. In later life, as he recounted his experience to his grandson, David Wilson gave "great credit to his benefactor."

David became a sea captain in 1847 at the age of 29. According to Floyd's account, his grandfather sailed to Europe, the West Indies, and all the chief ports of the world. As Floyd entitles this chapter, however, "Many Went to Sea, and Some Came Back."

> He once boarded a vessel whose crew was stricken with yellow fever, a scourge of the tropics. He remained aboard as long as he could do any good, burying the dead and caring for the sick at risk of his own life. But somehow he survived.

The ships were square-riggers. The primary driving sails were carried on horizontal spars, which were perpendicular to the keel of the vessel. Exclusively powered by the wind, the ships typically reached a speed of about 17 knots, or 19.56 miles per hour. No on-board engine was available to help avoid dangerous rocks.

Captain David regaled Floyd with stories of ships becalmed, of food and water supplies depleted for weeks at a stretch, and of men washed overboard in heavy seas. When sailing into Portland Harbor during the winter, every sailor had a hatchet, with which they chopped feverishly at the frozen spray encasing every spar and line to prevent the vessel from sinking with all its cargo. Floyd relished every word as he tried to envision his father's own life as a sea captain.

Late in life, Captain David came ashore under what he thought would be financially sound conditions. Unexpectedly, he lost most of his property and savings due to the failure of his employer, the Nat Blanchard Shipping Company, "through reverses of one kind or another." As a result, he lost thousands of dollars. This loss, says Floyd, "made the difference between wealth and its reverse.”
Making the best of the situation, Captain David provided his “growing brood of grandchildren” with a plot of land to till. By the time of his retirement, his son William had five daughters with Emily Norton: Rita (1879), Cecil (1881), Gertrude (1883), Hazel (1886), and Leila (1890). His daughter Elizabeth had two daughters with Charles B. Norton, Genevieve (1886) and Ernestine (1888), and one son, Floyd (1891).

Without warning, a life-changing crisis occurred that brought the grandchildren closer together. In the mid-1890s, Floyd’s father was lost at sea. Floyd’s mother and his two sisters, Genevieve and Ernestine, moved in with their five female cousins, the aforementioned daughters of William and Emily Wilson. Their gabled house, which William built, was located on land next to Captain David’s home. With two bedrooms and a bath upstairs, there was barely room for them then, let alone now with three adults and seven children. Floyd, the only boy, was sent to live with “Aunt” Olive Merrill (1847), a cousin about a mile away near Cumberland Junction.

At the time, Aunt Olive was about 55 years old, single, and living alone. She taught at Schoolhouse No. 7 at the junction of Range Road and present-day Winn Road. Floyd characterized her as “plenty strict.”

Some people called her stubborn on this or that idea. To them she would respond, “I don’t call it stubborn; I call it firm.” In any case it was as inflexible as a hardwood ruler, and nobody ever got her to abandon an adopted position. Maybe that was why, in the yearly town report, the Superintendent observed that Miss Merrill kept a well-ordered school.

Her home, no doubt, was likewise ordered according to strict rules. Floyd’s childhood and teenage years were spent under her tutelage.

During the late nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, the Junction was a “hive of activity.” Forty trains a day passed through the Junction; the yard had seven tracks, including three main line tracks and four side tracks. The railroad was in its heyday, and passengers filled the coaches.

Floyd even noticed the railroad bridge, with its U.S. Geodetic Survey bronze plate attached to the stonework. It gave the altitude as at about sea level, “[... like every other railroad bridge in the whole country.” Floyd adds, “All were of interest; they spoke of life, and workmen, and the purposes to which they worked.”

In addition to all the activity at Cumberland Junction, Floyd was attracted to the telegraph office where Henry Adams served as an agent for more than 20 years. Agent Adams monitored everything happening outside his office. More than once, he spotted danger developing and raced outside to hand signal at unaware pedestrians.

Thanks to his timely warning a teen-ager, wool-gathering for the moment, walking down to the switch-house in the noise of a heavy freight train and not hearing No. 102—the evening west bound flyer from Bangor—above the roar of the freight train, and walking in the flyer’s path, owes his life to this day. Henry’s shout and signal warned him in time to step off just within feet of the rushing locomotive.

Floyd, it is believed, was that “wool-gathering” teenager.

Ever curious, Floyd became intrigued with Henry’s work as a telegrapher. He was a quick learner, and soon mastered the skill with which he made his livelihood during early adulthood. Floyd was “able to get a job anywhere.” All told, he worked for seven major
western union offices. His telegraphic speed was 40 words per minute, one of the best known rates at that time.

As far as schooling is concerned, Floyd attended Schoolhouse No. 7, then continued on to Greely Institute, graduating in 1908. After studying French there, he had a working knowledge of 3000 words.

After he graduated from Greely, Floyd practiced his trade as a telegraph operator. Though he left Cumberland, he remained in the area. In 1910 he lived in New Gloucester, where he held a job as a telegraph operator at the age of 19. In 1915, he boarded with Mrs. Lizzie Edwards in Portland, where he found work at a Western Union branch.

During this period, he was in contact with administrators at Bates College. He passed a few tests and was enrolled as a student. Floyd completed the four-year program in two years, and graduated from Bates in 1918.

On July 25, 1918, he was inducted into the U.S. Army in Yarmouth, Maine. His Draft Registration application listed Floyd as “slender, medium height, not bald, black hair, and dark brown eyes.” He advanced rapidly and was promoted to Private 1st Class on October 9, 1918. By the end of the next month, he was named a Corporal. On January 17, 1919, he received an honorable discharge when his company was demobilized.

In late winter of 1925, Floyd made use of his tinkering skills and invented the motorized toboggan. As reported in the Portland Press Herald, it was a “sled that doesn’t have to be pulled back up the hill.” Floyd installed a two-cylinder, 10 horsepower motorcycle engine on his toboggan and fitted it with a three-foot aeroplane propeller. By the time he was finished tinkering, winter had passed. Floyd had to wait until the following winter to test drive his invention.

A reporter noted the motorized toboggan “scoots over the surface of snow, much in the manner of one of those little shiny water-bugs.” In soft snow, its speed varied from 15 to 35 miles per hour, but on a hard crust, it reached speeds of up to 50 miles per hour. Floyd patented his invention. Until the day of his death, he received a small monetary dividend from his patent annually.

By 1927, he was working as a telegrapher in Bridgton. He boarded with six others. He remained there, according to the 1930 census. Bridgton was close enough to Cumberland, allowing him to maintain contact with Aunt Olive.

As long as Aunt Olive was alive, Floyd felt a sense of responsibility and kept in contact. Aunt Olive lived alone, according to census reports of 1920 and 1930. She died in 1937. After funeral arrangements were made, Floyd recalls, “I got out of the country as fast as I could. That old house was a symbol of confinement, but I stayed for the old lady that brought me up.”

By 1940, Floyd was working for the U.S. Veterans Administration in Waukesha, Wisconsin. He listed his occupation as a writer, and lived in a Soldiers Home.

Waukesha was known for its very clean and pure-tasting spring water. Floyd savored it, apparently, for when he returned to Maine after his retirement, he was intent on finding a town with pure drinking water. He believed it enhanced and extended life.

Floyd registered for the World War II draft in 1942 at the age of 51. He was living in Greene, Indiana, at the time. He served as a civilian aircraft engineer during World War

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1 Portland Press Herald, January 26, 1926.
2 Floyd W. Norton, Interview with Sally A. Merrill, March 25, 1983.
II at Chanute Field, south of Rantoul, Illinois. The field was renamed Chanute Air Force Base in 1948. There, he lectured six hours a day on “technical subjects.” One year, he taught in the propeller division. At another time, he taught AC/DC electrical components of the airplane.\(^3\)

Floyd taught in high schools in Maine, Colorado and Arizona, and at the Teachers College in Idaho. Throughout his lifetime, he lived and worked in 46 states.

One day, Floyd was asked to teach exchange students from Madrid. “Can you handle this?” his supervisor asked. “Sure,” he replied. On the appointed day and time, he made his appearance. He brought “three big Bible-looking books, and slammed them on the table.” Students stared at the new instructor. He replied “Buenos Dias.” Nonplused, Floyd noted to himself, “The difference between educated man and an ignoramus is vocabulary. We think the same thoughts, but in our own language.” He received a roar of approval.

Norton worked there until retiring in 1957. On the day he turned 65, Floyd’s supervisor said, “Mr. Norton, you are 65 years old today. You’re fired. Understand? Today is the last day.”

Fifteen minutes passed. The Supervisor reappeared, “Would you consider working another year? Next year, when you are 66, I will have to fire you and make it stick.”\(^4\)

Floyd recalled, “I don’t know why they retained me one year longer except they knew I knew two languages more than most engineers.” As agreed, Floyd officially retired the following year. He was 66 years old.

Meanwhile, Floyd met Ada Odessa Myers in Gosport, Indiana. Suddenly, his life took a new turn. On June 10, 1942, they were married in Vincennes, Indiana. At the time, Floyd was 51 and Ada was 48. It was the first and only marriage for both.

Ada was born in Toledo, Illinois, in 1894. Her father, James P. Myers, was born in Indiana, and her mother, Elizabeth H. Goodwin, in Illinois. Her parents married in 1871. Other children of the couple included Alvah (1873), Florence (1879), and Edward (1885).

Her father died in 1897 in Sumpter, Illinois, when Ada was only three years old. She was very fond of her brothers growing up, and enjoyed a rich family life. Like her brothers, Ada became a devoted teacher. She completed a year of college.

Her mother died in 1932 in Toledo, Illinois, when Ada was 38 years old. After her mother’s death, Ada continued to share a home in Toledo with her older brothers as she had since birth. Ten years after her mother’s death, she married Floyd Norton. Fond memories of her brothers stayed with her for the rest of her life.

After Floyd retired in 1957, they traveled much of the country together on his motorcycle. Eventually, they returned to the Cumberland area and searched for appropriate lodging. With Waukesha’s water in mind, Floyd insisted on finding a place with a source of pure water. Floyd and Ada found a suitable apartment on West Elm Street in Yarmouth. Sheltered by tall, stately elm trees, the apartment was supplied with pure water from an artesian well. Reaching the apartment’s second-story bedroom and bath required a climb of approximately 20 steps. Both Ada and Floyd were able to do this easily every day until the end of their lives. Neither one suffered from pain in knees or hips—no knee or hip replacements necessary!

One afternoon, I asked Floyd “To what do you attribute your good health?” Initially,
he answered indirectly. “Some things,” he said, “we are not supposed to know. I have seen illness now and then. I spent two years in a government hospital during World War I.”

Then responding in a more direct manner, he replied, “Ways of life and ways of thought. We cannot follow a morose mental attitude. Natural laws govern. Plato gave a simple rule, ‘We become what we contemplate.’”

“If that is true, why not contemplate what we wish to become? That is simple! I believe in it 100%!”

To elaborate, Floyd quoted Proverbs 23:7: “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Throughout his life, Floyd was an avid reader, exploring the writings of Christian mystics as well as Buddhist teachers such as Dudjom Rinpoche.

As a part of his early education, Floyd had to memorize certain Psalms. That afternoon, in a sonorous voice filled with feeling, he recited Psalm 91 from memory:

*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

*I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God: in him will I trust.*

All his life, no matter the circumstances, that Psalm sustained him.

Without complaint, Floyd accepted the vicissitudes of life. He refrained from judging. He was at peace with the world, at peace with all that happened in his life, and with all that happened in the world at large.

Floyd Norton died on May 13, 1988, at the age of 97. Ada continued to live in their apartment, almost to the time of her death at age 103 on June 7, 1997. They both were grateful for their lives, and for their life together.

Sally A. Merrill, May 11, 2017

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Agitation toward a more independent status for the Province of Maine, distinguished from the parent Massachusetts, had begun as early as 1785 among a growing minority, augmented after the War of 1812. The little town of Freeport was, briefly, chosen the capital. Thus it became referred to as “The Birthplace of Maine.” After appropriate promotion a group of commissioners from both Maine and Massachusetts met at the Jameson Tavern in Freeport where they signed the final papers of separation in March of 1820, and thus the birth of Maine’s statehood is designated as March 3rd of that year.

Jameson Tavern, Freeport

The French-and-Indian Wars were over. Maine’s wilderness had borne the brunt of them, with sporadic reverberations in the new frontiers of Indiana and Illinois. Migrations from earlier colonies had augmented surprisingly until at Statehood Maine had a population of about 300,000 to start with (from the Maine Register, 298,355).

It seems likely that the strenuous lives of the early settlers served as a character-mold, bringing to surface the courage and ingenuity that gave the new state its unique personality. Within a few decades the outside world marveled at the industry and integrity of the people of the Pine Tree State.

In hindsight we are bound to feel that had the later “early” settlers in Massachusetts, as well as in Maine, treated the aborigines with more human consideration than they did the white intruders would have suffered much less hardship than had become their lot. After the Pilgrim Band were established in Plymouth other Old World ships brought other contingents to augment the population of the new land. These later immigrants, up through the Puritan era, were not stamped always with the integrity of the Mayflower Pilgrims. It is a wonder, really, that the Squanto and Massasoit did as kindly for the latter as they did, for they came to have their grievances against even the second boat of newcomers. Why Massasoit did not join his headstrong son, Philip, in a project of general massacre of all the English settlers within a year of their arrival bespeaks something of a tribute to the doughty Chief. To these later English arrivals the Indians were a benighted lot to be murdered on sight or cheated at will.

For a sample of Puritan era treatment of the red men there is the well authenticated story related by Capital Pierce who traversed all the wilderness area in those times. A white trader, related Captain Pierce, sold a quantity of gun-powder to an Indian for a much larger quantity of skin and furs, then mollified the “savage” for the sharp trade with the assurance that if the latter would plant the powder it would sprout and grow like grain. Thus the Indian saw a way to get rich quick!

When spring came he planted the powder-like corn. Meantime he took out a big order of supplies from the white trader without immediately paying for them. Throughout the summer and fall the Indian waited, then was aghast when nothing came out of his planting. In early winter the white trader showed up to dog the Indian for payment for the goods. Whereupon the victimized Indian looked the trader straight in the eye and said, “Me pay you when my powder grow.” The guilty trader somehow did not seem to have an argument for that one; and he rather quickly took his chagrin with him out of range of the cheated redskin. That was the sort of incident that bred Indian massacres. The French, jealous of the English settlements, could
thus easily stir up the Indian against the latter after repeated dealings of that sort.

But, as indicated, the Indian, the French-and-Indian and the Revolutionary Wars were over. Yet for a considerable time after statehood the settlers were still dealing with Indians. An indigenous race dies out hardly.

Captain David Wilson told this story of his own youth—along about 1830—when, one cold, blustery winter’s day after a heavy fall of snow, his mother had said to him, “We haven’t seen anything of those three Indians, living in that lean-to three miles over there beyond the Range-line woods, for a week. Before we got this new two feet of snow the man was out here to the road. He said he was going hunting over around the Duck Pond. Maybe he didn’t get back home before the blizzard struck. I’m worried about those two squaws. David, hadn’t you better put on your snowshoes and walk over there to take them something to eat, just in case they’re all alone?”

So David strapped on his snowshoes at the woodshed door, took the small sack of corn meal his mother handed him, then set out into blowing snow-clouds for the Indians’ camp three miles west.

He stumbled almost onto the fir bough thatched lean-to at the edge of the big woods, snowed-in top, bottom and sides. At the comotion one of the squaws shoved open the fir bough and pine door and invited the visitor in. They had a piddling little smudge of pitch branches inside that gave off a modicum of warmth and filled the 6 by 8 enclosure with an acrid smoke. They admitted that they had nothing on hand to eat, that the brave had gone hunting two days before.

“Well, what were you going to eat until he comes home?” David asked the bigger, squatty one.

“Well, see-see today Friday,” grunted the squaw, waving her fat hand through the smoke a little, “and see-see tomorrer, Saturday. Nobody do much Saturday. No do, no eat. Just lay around. Next day Sunday; same t’ing—no do, no eat. Then see-see next day Monday! Mebbe snow go ‘way some—wind or rain; then mebbe we git out to Road.”

The Road was where the white men’s village was—Cumberland Center. There was a store there, for buying and bartering. And by such means and reckonings small groups of Indians lived in 1840.

Cumberland Center inset, 1857 Cumberland County Atlas

When the Indian bands had receded into the wilderness their raids ceased, the whites spread upward from the coast through the valleys and along the rivers, first as the “medder” men, then the “hill” men until the forest wilderness had become peopled by immigrants in single cabins, then in nuclei of towns and villages. Thus for two hundred years, until the new state found itself a-borning with 300,000 people, more than New Hampshire had at that time even though it had already enjoyed statehood for about 32 years. But Maine had a lengthy
seacoast with some fine harbors and navigable rivers.

A whole flock of towns and villages became incorporated within the first year of statehood status, just one of them being Cumberland. A stone maker commemorating the event of its hundredth anniversary was erected in 1921 in front of the house formerly occupied by Fred Adams, and now owned by Mrs. Lincoln—one of the three or four earliest houses built in the town. Within that first hundred years of statehood the whole population burgeoned amazingly in spite of the Civil War’s depressing effect.

Aside from isolated farmsteads, spaced around a half mile apart, villages had sprung up anywhere from 3 to 10 miles distant from one another, drawing trade from the outlying farms to become distributing points and meeting points for their people. Each village had a general store or two, with a big-belled stove in the center of every one, a grocery counter with a tall coffee grinder near one end of it with its large twin balance wheels to give momentum in the grinding of coffee, a dry goods counter or section, a bakery goods corner, barrels standing around in such positions as to leave a traffic lane somewhere through the interior, and lanterns and other utilities hung from big nails overhead.

This one was built in 1864 near the closing days of the Civil War, the photo taken a little later when distribution had become better. To the left of the line of the stove can be seen the old coffee grinder at the end of the grocery counter. In one of these village stores you could buy overalls, shoes, pickles, olive oil, “pinglin’ panacea” for your colds, a cane for your rheumatiz-ridden muscles, Epsom salts or Hood’s Sarsaparilla.

Of course we left out such staples as sugar and molasses. These should be understood, especially in the coastal towns of Maine, for shipping had been carried on even from the times of John Smith and Sieur de Monts. Maine was thus favored with its seaports which were the lending ports for all sorts of South American and West Indian products which did not reach the inland areas until a better distribution system had come about.

The settlers having settled, for a while they found themselves stuck in the farmsteads and homes they had wrested from the wild lands. They had to be self-contained though their plain isolation. The “medder” men who culti-
vated the more lush valleys of the lowlands did better than the hill men who had elected to go back inland among the rocks to grub a living from most stubborn conditions any immigrants ever encountered almost. Yet they survived. Hill country towns, even, sprang up each however with a great need for transportation. Freight wagons were built which by the early 1820’s were threading their ways from town to town and to lower-lands points.

Then people themselves waned travel facilities. Already there were stage lines running over Massachusetts between principal cities patterned much after the English coach lines but without the highway hazards of robbery which was so common that it was said that somewhere in England a coach was set upon by robbers every day of the year.

In 1827 an event occurred that gave great impetus to travel by stage. Some genius in Concord, New Hampshire invented a good stage coach. It was always called the Concord coach; and according to a contemporary traveler it was “the most comfortable vehicle ever made.” Inside of a year Concord stage coaches were running over all the principal roads in Maine and New Hampshire, and within three years had supplanted every other type in Massachusetts and New York.

Two years before Statehood in Maine there was a stage line already in operation between Augusta and Boston with the sponsors boasting that they made the trip in 3 days—the first day to Portland. They did this, of course, by changing horses about every ten to twelve miles. It is about 60 miles from Augusta to Portland, and 120 from Portland to Boston. From this it will be seen that running a stage line was more than one carriage being drawn by 2 or 4 horses. It was common enough, on such a line as was established in 1825 from Portland to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, for the outfit to have 200 to 400 horses stabled at change-points throughout the system. That took many horses, mows of hay, and inns where the travelers slept overnights. For stage coach travel was generally a daylight proposition. And the roads were old-fashioned dirt roads—like this one:

![Main Street, c. 1880](image)

The activities of these stage lines for the first three and four decades of our Statehood were far beyond the proportions realized by any of the people living today even along the old routes on which they flourished. A few of the old inns are still standing, even concealed by renovations and alterations. The Bay of Naples Inn on the Portland-to-White Mountains route via North Conway has only recently been torn down. But the Albert Beals place, still occupied by Mrs. Hattie Little, a lady of 90, was one of the old stage coach inns. Part of the old stables have been removed. This large house sits at the junction of the Cumberland Center and Yarmouth roads in Walnut Hill Village in North Yarmouth.

Stage coach-wise Hallowell was one of the busiest places in the meadow area of Maine. By 1820 steamboats were along the Kennebec pick-
ing up passengers for Portland and Boston, and the stages from east and west and north met the steamboats. Those early steamboats were wood burners. It was not until 1835 that the small steamer, Portland, was the first to burn coal. Thereafter the riverside wood yards began to decline to make way for coaling docks. By then there had been established a criss-cross network of the stage lines over the more populous parts of Maine, reaching out of it even into New York State. Here is one of the interstate coaches of about 1842. This one was carrying more than 20 passengers, drawn by six horses:

Thus the stage coaches, from about 1823, combined with early river and coastal travel to bring those with the urge to travel out of the isolation that their meadow- and hill-settlements had imposed upon them. They began to see the world outside, to rejoice in the cheek-to-jowl contacts they made in the process. For riding at close quarters for sometimes days on end engendered more confidence than aloofness. And a long stage trip was, in many cases, something long to be remembered, and talked over, for the rest of the passengers’ lives.

“You know, Tabitha, on that stage trip I took to Gardiner—see, that was eight years ago—I rode for two solid hours without my bonnet!”

“Why, Patience, how could you?”

“Well, when we got into Waterville, whilst the coachmen changed horses, I got out and walked around a little near the stables. It had been pretty warm and dusty, and my bonnet strings were tied too tight. I untied them whilst I walked. Then the coachman vaulted up and I had to hurry so not to get left. And we were going right off. The driver whipped up the horses right then as a breeze puffed through the coach and took my bonnet, with strings a-flyin’, right out over a field that hadn’t been mowed yet. A man passenger made motions as if to have the coach stopped; but I shook my head at him and he settled down again.

“You can’t run out in tall grass after a bonnet a-sailin’ towards nobody knows where. You’d trip over your hoops and fall down flat. And with the whole coach lookin’ on, I’d have been so horribly mortified. I’d never ha’ got over it!

“Well, so I rode on without any bonnet, hopin’ the others wouldn’t notice. But after a minute or two they seemed to forget it, and I enjoyed the cool wind, even with the dust.

When we got ‘most in to Gardiner I glanced back and noticed, through the window, a man comin’ along behind us in a post-chaise—a-gainin’ on us fast! When we stopped in town to change horses he drove up, and spied me right off. He pulled from under his jacket my lost bonnet, with the strings all folded in. He bowed and handed it through the window to me, with all the passengers lookin’ on! And he said, “I seen yer bonnet go flyin’, and I stopped and took after. It just flew across the little field and hung up in some alders. It was easy got.”

“I thanked him ever so much, and he blushed all over his face. And he was such a nice-lookin’ young man: he had a sandy mustache that curled right up tight and at the tips; and he was beautifully bashful!”

“Well, I never!” said Tabitha.

Yes, more romances were started from the stage-coach encounters than have ever been recorded, if we credit the stories of people like Joseph Lincoln and Alice Morse Earle about life in Old New England.

But these were only fair weather aspects
of coaching days. Less pleasant to contemplate was the dreariness of early morning starts in rain and cold, or on winter days when the coach body had been reset to iron runners for highway journeys in Northern New England. There was no heat in these coaches, of course, except for occasional soapstones or hot water cans supplied at some tavern stop, yet travel persisted through fair and foul, in heat or cold.

Foreside Road after a storm

The stage lines endured, though in shrinking degrees as the new railroads gradually supplanted them throughout the 1800’s. The last vestiges of stage coach days lasted into the ’90’s when but a few short-hauls were left, mostly for inland mail transportation, like that from Brownfield to Denmark, Maine. A passenger or two by then had become merely incidental. This “stage” was still running, as an open pung through the winter, in 1900. That ride behind a single horse, with no soapstones supplied, between snow-covered fields and hills for two hours was something nearly to freeze one’s feet. (Yes, this recorder remembers well that ride at zero in January of 1900.) Yet it was still The Stage to all the locals and the world at large.

On some summer short sections the coach took the form of the land barge. Then, soon after 1900, all that was left of a once-flourishing carrier system was a number of long-bodied barges, dragged out of a storage to serve as short-trip recreation vehicles. Each barge had its name prominently painted along each side. In Cumberland we seated ourselves on the lengthwise seats, the aisle in the middle, of the Velma C. to go to a Sunday School picnic at Dalton’s Shore in Cumberland Foreside 5 miles, to Riverton Park in Deering, 10 miles, to Underwood Spring in Falmouth, 7 miles, or Prince’s Point or a High School Field Day at Yarmouth, 5 miles, for an afternoon’s recreation.

“Rah, rah; ree, ree, ree—
We are the crew of the Velma C.!”

Of course the growing railroads, from the 1840’s, overlapped the work of the stages as the former expanded, but more rapidly after the Civil War. Though a stage coach was much more accessible to robbery than a railroad train the chief gain in patronage of the latter was due, of course, to the speed of travel. People in Maine were not deterred from coach travel so much as, perhaps, people of the other early states were, from the hazards of robbery.

Early railroad line

England had had, for decades, something like an epidemic of coach robberies. But the English had made it so hot for highwaymen that a half dozen or more of these had migrated to the United States where the pickings might be easier. Massachusetts had four or five of them. They were pretty smooth operators; but there seems to be no record of their depredations in Maine. Just to illustrate by one Massachusetts case how smooth these practiced thieves could be, and how resourceful, we can cite Mr. George White. He would steal a horse, then rob lone horsemen or a stage full of passengers with equal aplomb, but he was so gentlemanly about it all that he
wouldn’t rob a woman, even though she wore a gold neck chain or diamonds for ear pendants.

He was once nearly caught up with, riding a stolen horse in broad daylight, by a sheriff’s posse. They were getting pretty close. At a sudden sharp turn in the road he dismounted quickly, lashed the horse with a whip, then yanked his jacket wrong-side-out, since it had convenient changeable liner, grabbed his broad-brimmed hat and in a jiffy cut off three quarters of the brim, making of it a passable visored cap, then turned to meet the sheriff and his men. In the abrupt turn he almost got under their horses’ feet before they saw the foot traveler who looked so different from their quarry which they had once sighted. The sheriff pulled up and bawled out, had he seen a man riding fast on horseback? “Why, yes,” the pedestrian assured him, “I just met a man riding as if the devil was after him.” The posse hurried on, and found the horse, a half mile down the road, cropping grass along the right-of-way. But they never did catch up with George White.

The stage coach was slow. People soon tired of spending days and days on a long stage trip when by a steam train they could make it in a day or two. There is still on exhibit at the Hermitage in a well-kept carriage house, the heavy, lumbering coach in which President Andrew Jackson made a round trip from Washington in a family crisis. The distance from Washington to Nashville, Tenn. along the route Jackson took, was about 800 miles. It took him 30 days to make the trip, one way. So states the sign attached to that old, rugged vehicle for all to see.

Thus passed an era which gave away to that of the railroads. Their period of passenger travel lasted, principally, about 75 years-1860 to 1935 or ’40.

Homes of the 1800’s

Until well after the beginning of statehood the far greater part of the population was rural. Though a few towns began to spread out to take up acreage, the very spirit of the settlers was rural. It still is, among the more thoughtful people. City people ape the airs of those of bigger cities. And after two generations become the sort of individuals that the freer individuals of the open country laugh at. Says the log-peeling ruralist beside the road, with only a one-second’s glance at the bespangled intruder with the shiny car who half stops and inquires peremptorily at a Y-intersection, both branches pointing to Portland, “Does it make any difference which one of the roads I take to the city?”—”Not to me,” and continues his bark peeling. And there’s considerable sound sense and understanding in that retort. Ostentation brings its own reward in our state.

The home built in Maine during that first century, and back into the previous one for another hundred years, were built in the native manner with ruggedness and integrity in every sill and timber. Their utility and durability are proven in these standing examples.

The Buxton house. Built in 1799, the figures worked into the bricks on the back side of the chimney. This house stands on upper Main St. in Cumberland Center. Formerly the home of Arthur Blanchard’s family. Note the arch at left under which the stage coaches changed horses. This was on one of the stage lines from Augusta to Portland. About 1880 George Blanchard tore out an old stage-time building for more room for his farming operations. It had 18 horse stalls in it—a relic of stage coach days. The elm at the right is now 140 years old. Part of the Colonial fan over the front door is seen at the right edge of photo.

Arthur Blanchard home, Tuttle Road
Built in the 1770’s. Now owned and occupied by Arthur Blanchard’s family.
of Howard Buxton, the best bass singer in Cumberland ever heard. This house, too, with its original large stable, was once a stage-stopping point.

The Sweetser house in Cumberland Center. Built in 1800. Within the memories of neighbors still living, this house has seen four generations of the Sweetzers grown up in this house which stands about a furlong’s distance west of the crossroads, Blanchard Road—Samuel, Fred, Herman, and his children. It is still the home of Herman and Phyll Sweetser.

The Fred Adams place, also built 150 years ago—and more. It is at present owned and occupied by Mrs. Lincoln. For years it was owned by Fred Adams, the village blacksmith.

The first Oren Thomes residence on Blanchard Road at Cumberland Center. Mr. Thomes was a well-know mill man. He built a sawmill alongside the road about 50 yards south of this home. He also built a mansion opposite these buildings where his family grew up while he ran the mill, but the fine house was destroyed by fire in 1913. It was replaced later by a more modern, but less ornate, house occupied by Dr. John E. Gray who retired here after a long medical practice in Portland. The Thomes mill also burned about 1907.

Note that the detail, above the picture, of the plate over the front door, showing date of construction. Some of the beams and floor timbers of the old barn were 14” x 14”s.
ary War in 1776.

Once called the Woodbury Hamilton house, and still later the Willie Merrill home, was built in 1894, according to the style of that time. It was complete with house and barn with connecting lower story in which wood was stored in season. It stands at the top of Morse’s Hill on the east side as one enters Cumberland Center Village from the south. It is a fine, compact sample of the country home of the ’90’s. It looked pretty grand when it went up. By this time builders were experimenting with eaves projecting fore and aft as well as the sides. When this house was new the word around town was that the set of buildings cost $1200! That was a lot of money to put into a house. There are a lot of people in this vicinity now who would be delighted to buy the place—after 75 years—for its original cost.

In the ’80’s and 1890’s this farm was known as the Harris Place. It was one of the better homes of the Meadow country—on the lowlands near the sea. It stands at 59 feet above sea level a little east of the Cumberland Junction area. From the early ’90’s until about 1909 it was the home of the Arthur Stanleys, and now is owned and occupied by the Harris Coreys. Curious, this shifting about of names. Originally owned by a Harris, and now by a man with the first name of Harris. The original (sentence cut off by photocopier)

**The Railroad Era**

The first requirement of a civilization, as we know it, is a good system of transportation. Freight wagons had been built and started on carrier routes even before the stage-coaches appeared. They meagerly served a purpose. They were forerunners of the railroads. The first steam railroad to operate in Maine was built in 1836, connecting Bangor with the village of Old town, 12 miles northward, with the ambitious name of Bangor & Pisqataquis Canal & Railroad Co. It was a pretty simple affair, compared to later-day achievements. It used two stage-coach bodies hitched in tandem to run along a wooden rail track with only a thin strap of iron nailed along the tops of the wooden rails, hauled by a British engine of the Fulton type which weighed about 6 tons.

**Question:** how heavy a load would such a train haul? Since the coaches with their running gear would weigh three or four tons to start with, about 6 tons. A single low-side coal car on the Maine Central of 1920 carried 100 tons easily enough, and there would be 61 cars in the train.

But that Bangor to Oldtown venture was a beginning if not an impressive one. By 1855 there were about a dozen hopeful railroads that had sprouted in the state, and by 1870 about a dozen more, such as: The Penobscot & Kennebec, Somerset, Androscoggin & Kennebec, Androscoggin R.R, Portland & Kennebec, Knox & Lincoln, Portland & Ogdensburg, European & North American, Dexter & Newport, Buckfield & Canton. In 1862, however, the Androscoggin & Kennebec and Penobscot & Kennebec were consolidated under the name of Maine Central Railroad.

From there on the latter acquired, leased or absorbed all of the others, and more, to become the biggest system in the state. The gauge of the tracks became standard mostly, like railroads in other states—the 4 ft. 8½ inch—because that was the distance between the wheels of an old Roman chariot. The Maine Central booklet explains all this which seems quite a comical idea.

With the development of the railroads businesses were established and encouraged by a sort of mutual induction. The towns took on
new individualities according to their special resources. Bangor found new facilities for expanding its fish and lumber businesses; Rockland, its lime; Auburn built shoe factories; Lewiston, textile mills. South Paris, in the wood novelty field, turning out spools and toothpicks by the millions; Bridgton turned to game boards and wooden toys—and, incidentally, build the first automobile in Maine around 1900. The towns along the Kennebec put up great ice-houses, cutting the thick ice on the river during the dead of winters to ship out, packed in sawdust, to a hundred communities. That was before the day of the artificial ice production, of course, and to the travelers in trains the signs in big lettering of The American Ice Co. on the sides of the storage barns became a very common sight. The great pulp and paper industries shipped their products to distant cities.

Maine shipyard

Coincidentally, Yarmouth was building ships in its Royal River estuary; it built more than 300 ocean-going vessels before the mid-1880’s. Cumberland developed the greenhouse business with four principal establishments around the Center, two meat packing plants, several thriving poultry houses, and a corn shop at the railroad Junction that packed and labeled with the name of the Cumberland Packing Ass’n., thousands of wooden cases of vegetables each summer and fall. The railroads made business hum. Around each railroad station a village clustered, even in the smaller towns. The junctions were hives of activity. Here is shown the upper side of the village at Cumberland Junction, 1912:

Any boy could see that there was more “going on” around the railroad yards, freight house, and station than in any other part of town. There was the tall water tank, out between the side-tracks, that was pumped full when it had become half empty by a steam pump just down over the bank not far from the eastern end of the long corn-shop. The pump was housed in a special, small building painted in the railroad colors. The switchman started the pump when the indicator high on the side of the tank showed the latter to be only half full. When the tank level reached close to the top mark a mechanical linkage device shut off the pump. The water came from the small river that flowed down by the corn-shop. It was delivered through stand-pipes to thirsty locomotives that stopped by one or the other. The fireman would scramble up over the tender, loaded with coal, to reach out and turn the snout of the standpipe at a 90-degree angle from its resting position longitudinal to the track. When turned thus, the water rushed down the buried pipe and out the snout to fill the water-tank part of the tender.

When the engine-tank neared full, the fireman swung the snout outwards again parallel to the track and the water was shut off. The engine now had water enough to make steam to climb Walnut Hill Grade and continue on to Lewiston, or clear to Waterville on the “Lower Road.”

Even the big, elevated water tank, its pumping station, the standpipes as well as the river and its railroad bridge in the whole altitude above sea level—like every other railroad bridge in the whole country—was of interest. All were of interest; they spoke of life, and workmen, and the purposes to which they worked.

That Lower Road (to Brunswick) stand-
The pipe spout had a leak in it right at the outer neck. When the water had been turned on by the position of the spout, the engine tender tank didn’t get what escaped through that \( \frac{1}{4} \) inch hole. The fireman’s mouth caught a lot of that as he stood on the coal bunker waiting for the engine-tank to fill. A swell place to catch a drink on the fly! Germs in the water, maybe? What would a 225-lb. fireman in coal-smudge overalls care about a few germs in the tank water? Or know about them? They hadn’t even been discovered then, anyway. Neither had pollution. Nobody ever heard anybody suggest that the Big Brook was polluted. So the firemen never seemed to get sick.

**Cumberland Junction Station**

But there were dangers there, just the same, for small boys or careless women. Everything about a railroad yard bristled with them. That standpipe, for instance. Its vertical body, a foot in diameter, stood so close to the track—a carefully measured distance of 10 inches or so—that it would not clear a man riding by grab-iron holds on the side of a box-car. Railroad men knew that, and small boys found it out, if they survived.

But Crawford Lord didn’t know it. He hadn’t been railroad trained. He was a hard-working farmer who lived just beyond the Falmouth Winn-Road cemetery a half mile beyond the Webb Dyer place (now the Oulton place). He had been to Brunswick or Augusta on some business errand on a Maine Central train, and did not come back until a night train which made it after dark when it pulled in to make the Cumberland Junction stop. It had slowed down, but Mr. Lord wasn’t sure it would stop long enough for him to get off. He was pretty anxious, back there in his seat in the coach. He had got up and walked along the aisle of the car and out upon the open vestibule, hanging to the iron railing to take a look through the fog and dark. He leaned out of the vestibule, keeping a hold upon the closed iron gate, to see how near his section of the train was to the station. His head came just to the level of an iron grating platform high up to the side of the standpipe. And that’s the last look he ever took. His jaw struck the standpipe grating with a crash. The train stopped at the station; and the two brakemen carried him into Nat Cole’s house, just opposite, where he died in a few hours. (This incident took place about 1899.) Mr. Lord left a wife, a boy of 16, and two girls of 12 and 18. The boy, named Merton, had to take up where the father had left off, to carry on the work of providing for the family.

Some years after this episode the railroads abolished the open vestibule, and all passenger trains were of the closed vestibule type, with no way of opening the ends of the coaches except by a qualified trainman. Yet we all liked the open vestibule better: a closed-in passenger could then take a stroll out of a car, as the train rushed onward, to get a breath of air—and smoke and cinders—to relieve the tedium of a long trip. He usually came back inside, with face and neck and white collar pretty well smoked up.

Then there was the turntable. Wasn’t that a swell thing to play around on! It weighed about 50 tons, and was made to turn locomotives around on such occasions as trainmen found to their purpose. It was so balanced by an immense swiveled bearing under the middle that if you threw a brick onto one end—say the slightly higher end—of it, it would teeter from the unbalanced weight. A boy could unlatch it by prying up the 5-pound iron latch out of its slot at one end, half way between the two rails, and then another boy or two at each end could
push on the long iron handles; then you all could jump onto it and get a circular ride from the momentum of the combined push. But you’d better leave the thing latched properly before leaving it. If you didn’t some Roadmaster, prowling around, would be after you right into your yard with a big stick and fearsome gestures. And after that, should your elders be at home, you didn’t get around that turntable again for quite a while. The Cumberland Junction turntable was between the last side-track (on the south) and the corn-shop, and almost up under the western side of the tall water tank. One of the Cumberland Center girls, come down of an afternoon in a group of four or five, riding around the circle as the others pushed on the handles, shoved her foot into the latch-slot as she went by. The foot fitted—too well. She couldn’t extricate it at once; and before her companions could stop the swing of the heavy iron-work by reversing their push upon the long handles her instep bone was broken. They borrowed a horse and buggy to take her home; but it is doubtful that she ever stepped on that juggernaut again.

Another teen-aged girl, walking along the railroad near the switch-house a furlong’s distance below the station, thought a steel “frog” in a cluster of switches a very attractive thing. It looked—that sharp angled between the rail-points—as if her foot might fit well into it. It did, and the foot was stuck—tightly! From up around the curve by the station a train whistled. It was a fast passenger, barreling along sixty miles an hour. The girl shrieked as bad as the locomotive. The switchman, in his little house less than ten yards away, ran out, yanked out his jackknife and jumped to her aid. The girl was wearing lace shoes. The switchman didn’t do any unlacing; he just ripped that knife-blade down through the strings in about one second. Then as he yanked the girl right out of her shoe that was stuck fast in the steel frog and got her clear of the track onto the gravel of the roadbed, the engine cylinder-head swished her clothes as it whistled by.

When the whole train had passed they looked for the shoe. Sixty flanged steel wheels had passed over it, jamming it into the rail-angle so compactly that it took two trackmen nearly a half hour, working with wrenches and pinch-bar, to clean the leather shreddings out of that frog. The girl walked a mile and a half home in one shoe and one stocking foot. She was one of the Danish girls from Woodville, her road just a mile from the Cumberland Center Main road.

The freight house was the busy place in the Junction village. The “way freight” to and from Bath every day brought the assorted things consigned to Cumberland people: barrels of flour and sugar, a hoghead of molasses now and then for E.B. Osgood who ran a butcher shop and store on SHE Street, which was to say the North Yarmouth Rd. a little way above Greely Institute; similar things for James L. Dunn who ran the more general store 50 yards below the 4-corners at the Center; all manner of sundries and appliances, even to a piano or an organ.
now and then, kitchen ranges and bed springs, cream separators and cement block machines, gallon cans of maple syrup and all the rest of the spices and condiments and furnishings that it took to run the homes of the town—previously ordered from Portland stores or from mail-order houses out West.

All of these, not to mention the stacks of tin lard pails and other containers already embossed or labeled for F. R. Sweetser & Son who ran a processing and packing plant of their own, up on Blanchard Road, as well as the other stacks of tin lard pails bearing the name of E. B. Osgood, the other packer in town.

Some of those stacks of pails for these men would run to 10 feet in length, with four or five stacks at a shipment. On a Monday morning that freight house might, perchance, be well-nigh empty, but after the “way freight” had come out and gone on its way to Bath the freight house would be stacked to the roof.

That would mean a lot of horse-drawn drays, wagons, and buggies to back up to the freight house platform for loading the treasures that John Scribner’s freight train had brought in.

There were other conductors, to be sure, but John Scribner, for years and years, was the old standby on that morning and afternoon way freight. He was a genial fellow, in his forties to sixties, who was so considerate of his brakemen as to let them do all the heavy lifting in loading and unloading the various cargoes whilst he loafed around the yard or station, talking with the agent or the switchman or even any townsman who happened around. The village people got to be quite familiar with his genial face with its sandy mustache, and its ready grin. He would even talk with passengers who were waiting for their train of “varnish cars,” as passengers were referred to by men of the freights. They enjoyed him, apparently, with relish. He was the jokingest joker our little village ever encountered.

There was, back in the 90’s, a boy who lived right up next to the railroad tracks, that is, except for a solid board fence 4 feet high. That was the only thing that separated the grounds of the house from the nearest track, the west bound of the Lewiston branch. That fence had become a handy screen to place between the urchin and the elders who bossed him around, as when certain odious tasks like long errands might be assigned to him. On a particular day in early fall, just as the Bath-to-Portland way
freight had entered the railroad yard, the youngster felt a sudden urge to be elsewhere—over at the corn-shop maybe, since it was going good; he could hear the drop of the cans in their chute and the whirr of the chain drives that ran a lot of interesting machines. But there, too, across the tracks was the village store: you could get two whole sticks of hard licorice for a nickel that week—anyway, the boy wanted to be where the action was!

The boy got to where the action was, all right; but it wasn’t just the sort of action that he had anticipated. He didn’t trust John Scribner too wholeheartedly thereafter.

Using a smallish tree for a shield he scrambled out of the back yard over the fence. He exulted a little in his prowess. Now he was safe. Those two old women couldn’t see him behind that board fence—if he “scooched” down a little. If he couldn’t make it to the end of the fence he knew how to get across the railroad unseen. At this point John Scribner came walking alongside his twenty freight cars. He didn’t appear to take note of the boy, walking parallel to him by the fence.

Out of the back upstairs door came a clarion query, “Boy, where are you?” The boy chose not to respond. Wasn’t he hidden perfectly? Then from downstairs a grumbling complaint came, “Where is that boy?

“Here he is, right here, hiding behind the fence,” John Scribner informed them loudly.

“Well, thank you!” said the grumbly voice, “I think you did us a service.” And John Scribner enjoyed engineering his biggest grin.

The Cumberland Junction railroad Station—after moving from the other side of the tracks, and in later years after the sign had been changed to Cumberland Center as more fitting for the whole area served. This move from the south side to the north of the tracks, by a large crew with winches and heavy timbers, was made in 1896 for better visibility up and down the tracks.

The move placed the station at the center of the outside of a curve instead of the inside. From here the station men had a clear view for a mile in each direction, a highly important feature in watching the movement of trains within the yard. From the bay window of the telegraph office Henry Adams, the Agent for more than 20 years, kept watch of everything outside during heavy movements of trains and traffic. More than once Henry spotted a danger developing and ran out to warn, by hand signals, some pedestrian or vehicle of such danger, and saved a number of people’s lives by his alertness. To his timely warning a teen-ager, wool-gathering for the moment, walking down to the switch-house in the noise of a heavy freight train and not wearing No. 102—the evening west bound flyer from Bangor—above the roar of the freight train, and walking in the flyer’s path, owes his life to this day. Henry’s shout and signal warned...
him in time to step off just within feet of the rushing locomotive.

Henry Adams had three sons—Belmont, Lee and Francis—all alive today and serving well in the work of the world.

In the early 1900’s there were 40 trains a day passing this station. There were seven tracks in the yard, including three main line tracks to and from Lewiston and Brunswick and four sidetracks. The Lewiston “branch” was really another main line, converging at Waterville on the way to Bangor. Below the station about a furlong’s distance stood a switch-house in the midst of a switch complex and a signal pole on which, by pulleys and chains, three great red sheet-iron oval balls a foot and a half in diameter were run up and down to the top of the tall mast showing now one ball, or then two, and then three to indicate any approaching trains the routes for which the track switches were set by the switchman. At night red lanterns were hooked below the red balls for the same indications. The switchman never made a mistake— theoretically. He’d better NOT have! Should he set the switches of a westbound main line passenger, coming at 70 miles per hour out of Brunswick bound to Portland, then run up two balls to indicate a clear westbound track for the Lewiston line and a heavy eastbound freight puffing its heaviest plume of coal smoke out of the engine with three hundred thousand tons of freight behind it, he could have mis-engineered a smash that would have cleaned that little switch-house right off from its foundations and killed half a trainload of passengers and probably the luckless switchman to boot! But that never happened at Cumberland Junction.

Civilization has always paid a price for its advancements. In 1894 a train came down the “back road,” (the Lewiston branch to the uninitiated) drawn by a locomotive with a diamond-shaped stack. That was Civil War time vintage.

Our neighborhood saw it; behind it was a string of gravel cars for road-bed maintenance west of us. So far as can be ascertained that was the last diamond-stacked locomotive to run down the Maine Central. And every car behind that old engine was coupled by link-and-pin. A few of these early couplings were still in use, but they vanished in the 1890’s with the coming into universal use of the M. C. B. (Master Car Builder) couplings invented just before that time which are still standard equipment on all railroads, such as are still running. This, one may say, is a trivial mechanical item, but from the standpoint of the trainmen operating the trains 75 years ago it was a vital thing.

Some twenty years after these ’90’s we—one or two of us—chanced to walk through the New Haven Railroad yard in South Boston where a number of maintenance men, at simple jobs, had been relegated by that railroad. There were more than a dozen men in sight at the time; and to our amazement we noted that every man was crippled in one way or another. Some were minus two or three fingers; others minus a hand or an arm. These men were in storage, virtually, like the yard full of old passenger coaches. We sought the yardmaster’s office and queried the man in charge, “Why are all these men out here crippled up like that?”

He responded laconically, “Link-and-pin men. They chose continued, less-active employment as long as they could do anything in place of the small pensions the railroad would have paid.
Yup, they got their fingers and hands in the way, trying to slip the pin into the link to couple up, with the engine backing up the string.” It was, that yard, veritably a lad of one-armed and one-handed men. That link-and-pin coupling was a crippler. No man need lose a hand or an arm where the M. C. B. coupling was a crippler. It has a long pin-raising lever outside, so no man need stand right between the massive cars to aid the automatic M.C.B. to snap shut as two strings of cars come—Bang!—together.

At the turn of the century those early years of the 1900’s saw the railroads approach close to their hay-day. 40 trains a day on the main lines through Cumberland and Waterville! The passengers filled the coaches, and the freight stacked up in the freight houses until the Big Railroad Brass, in raising fares and rates, adopted slogan and attitude of “The Public be damned!” That was the beginning of the end.

As railroad patronage began to drop off, automobiles and motor trucks began to flood the highways. The states and the nation scurried around with highway building and improvements to accommodate them. About 1947 the Maine Central, as a last gasp toward winning back their passenger business, came out with a new, palatial coach with special, resilient springs and elaborate upholstery in better-spaced seats; but it was no go. The splendid new coaches didn’t fill up near to capacity. Then within very few years all passenger service was discontinued altogether on the Penn-Central and the Santa Fe were left to carry on in passenger service. Somewhat the country doesn’t seem so cheerful and free as it did before. One can no longer step aboard the morning Farmington-to-Portland train at Cumberland Center station to ride across the entire United States to Los Angeles or San Francisco as he could in 1912—or even 1920.

On one return trip—from Port Costa, California we rode the Southern Pacific to Seattle, then on the Northern Pacific through North Dakota to Minneapolis and Chicago, thence on the Grand Trunk through Montreal and down to Portland, and out to Cumberland—at a ticket cost of less than $63.00; and that amounted to less than 2 cents per mile. And we slept in a tourist sleeping car berth every night. But by the 1920’s the Tourist Class had been discontinued. Now with our jet “civilization” one must go by airplane at about $140.00 for the trip to get hijacked, maybe, to Beirut or Cairo or Havana on the roundabout, hazardous, uncertain way.

Yes, we miss the railroads with their cheerful, sight-seeing days of travel. Down in Grand Central Station in New York, on a mezzanine above the waiting room area, you can still see a diamond-stack locomotive, looking diminutive beside of a big mogul of about a thousand tons that under its head of steam used to pull the varnish cars over the Alleghenies to points beyond. We feel a sad sense of loss as we look at these relics of an era that is gone.

The Native People Among Whom We Lived

There is no better index to the character of the Maine natives than this mute testimonial in The Apple Barrel, a roadside stand by the Herman Sweetser place on the Blanchard Road in Cumberland Center. The Sweetzers have long been orchardists. In this neat building the apples are sorted as to variety, an identified in each bin and box, with a price list displayed on a desk at the front. Containers are provided in peck, half peck and bushel sizes. Likely there is nobody in attendance. There doesn’t have to be.

You select your variety, then your contain-
er, fill it, and then pay for your fruit in the cash box on the front lower shelf. You make your own change out of that box. There’s enough change in it to change anything up to a ten dollar bill. Then you depart without any disturbance. And the place is open to all the world. That’s the same old coffee-pot cash box that has been there for years. The Sweetsers are not a fearful people. But they are perceptive down to the last grandchild.

Mrs. Phyllis Sweetser has been the town librarian for nineteen years. Herman was a former professor at the State University. He was the Son of the former packing firm of F.R. Sweetser & Son.

Another son, Ernest, who married Carrie Blanchard of the Fen Blanchard family on the same road, was for forty years head of the Mathematics Department of Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. up until his death a few years ago. Mrs. Sweetser has returned to the home town and lives at the Center across from the Prince Memorial Library.

There were no less than three principal poultry dealers and processors in Cumberland during the hey-day of the railroads. Willis and Walter Thurston had a shop just north of the Junction where they processed for express shipment barrels and barrels of dressed poultry for Boston and other markets. A sugar barrel stuffed with poultry packed in ice would weigh about 300 pounds, a nice little parcel for a 130 pound express handler to load into an express car! But the platform trucks were made with high platforms that came level with the car door-sill when wheeled up alongside. A small handler—a station-helper—could manage it easily by tilting the barrel slightly and wheeling it into the car on the bottom chime. The train expressman took it from there. Barrels, at that time, were as plentiful as Rhode Island Red roosters that awoke loud morning echoes all over the town around five or six o’clock.

Harvey Blanchard, just north of the Center cross-roads, was another such dealer, and Gilbert Strout, farther up SHE Street, still another. (SHE Street, so-named in old days from the fact that at times there were almost no men on it—all widows and unmarried women) All these poultry men hired women of the village, and a man or two each, to process the poultry for market.
Ducks were not so plentiful among the poultry; they were not so congenial companions. They would always manage to get out of their yards somehow to wander around the houses on every side. They would flap their wings and say, “Quack, Quack, Quack!” loudly at about 3 AM. With a flock of no more than a dozen, out there quacking, nobody got any more sleep for the night. The housewives were ready enough to get up at five or six, but at three o’clock some of them would balk. Nobody wanted a balky wife. There was too much to do during the daylight hours.

Then in Mid-November, of course, would come the turkey raffles. Each dealer contrived to hold one, with the menfolk from far and near trying, by lottery, to win a 20-pound turkey for Thanksgiving on a numbered 25 cent ticket. And everybody present had a good story-telling time.

“I’ve got the best dad-gummed place in the whole town,” said Nat Cole, the portly neighbor who lived in back of the house fronting the Main Road close to the railroad, to the nine-year-old boy who had come over from there to observe the doings of the busiest man in the village. “Yes, siree, the best place around! This big house with them long sheds reachin’ clear out ter the barn; in them last two I got two big sows; one of ‘em’ll be piggin’ next month. ‘Nd there’s thirteen cows in the barn, with fifty ton o’hay in the mows ter feed ‘em—along with them three horses. ‘Nd I got three kinds o’ wagons ‘nd a good sleigh for the winter. ‘Nd thirty dive acres besides that orchard up on the hill across the river with forty bearin’ trees. ‘Nd every travelin’ man that steps off of a train along with his sample cases comes right ter me. I hitch up a hoss ‘nd wagon ‘nd take him whever he wants ter go—Cumberland, Yarmouth, or Windham. I pick up a lot o’ money f’m cartin’ them around. Yes, sir, I got the best place around!”

The boy was impressed anew. He had long been free to run through Nat’s orchard to fill his pockets with Wealthies, Snow apples, or Pewaukées in the fall, to get a can of spring water from the spring, high up the brook hill on the high side of the orchard, and to fish along the brook down back of Nat’s buildings clear down to the railroad bridge. He fished even in the deep hole beyond it in which was buried the pipe to the pump-house through which the steam pump sucked up the water to fill the tall railroad tank. Nat certainly did have the most interesting place in that village.

“Tell yer what,” continued Nat, hitching up his overalls and taking a squint through his thick glasses at the urchin as they stood just outside the barn door, “If yer’ll drive my cows ter pasture, over to yer Uncle Edmund’s, mornin’s ‘nd then drive ‘em home ‘bout five o’clock in th’afternoons I’ll give yer ten cents a day to do it. It’s only a half mile over there; ‘nd that’d be f’m now up ter yer school time ‘bout the end o’ September. S’pose you could do that?”

“Sure, I could,” the boy assured him.

“Wall, yer’ll have ter git up in the mornin’, yer know, ‘bout seven o’clock, ter drive ‘em from the barn just’s soon’s I git ‘em milked. I just fixed it up with yer Uncle Edmund ter pasture ‘em over there. My pasture ain’t big enough, now that I’ve got my two back fields planted already
to potaters 'nd sugar beets.” Nat took a hitch in his overalls over his big frame and twisted an end of his sandy mustache to punctuate the deal.

Nat had, in previous years, been manager of the corn-shop. That was when they had made their own cans. Upstairs in that shop there were still tin-working machinery, punches, shears, and crimping devices formerly used in the 1880’s; but now a big can factory in Massachusetts furnished the cans ready-made at as low a cost as the corn-shops could afford, and only old, rusted tin cuttings by the thousands, thrown onto the steep bank behind the shop, were left to remind one of the rather big tin working formerly engaged in. The bright new cans were shipped in by box-car loads, set off on the corn-shop spur in season. But the corn-shop ran only a seasonal business, and Nat had left the job for someone else and concentrated on his small farm business which occupied him through the whole year. It was during his corn-shop years that he had planted he small trees over beyond the little pasture that, in ten years, had become a producing orchard. The orchard produced the best kinds of apples for family use. There were Wealthies, Snow-apples, Astrachans, Gravensteins, Pound Sweets, Pec- waukees, Rhode Island Greenings, Baldwins, Yellow Transparents, and Northern Spies. As well as two trees of Clapp’s Favorite pears. And all of them were now producing well. The year of this deal with the boy was 1899.

And so the boy drove Nat’s 13 cows that whole season from the barn, right across the railroad from the corn-shop, the half mile to Uncle Edmund Merrill’s pasture, and back, for 100 days. And Nat paid him ten dollars the day of his last trip to pasture. Ten dollars was a heap of money, to a boy of nine.

The youngster liked Jennie the best. She was a brown Jersey who didn’t slat her head around violently at flies if the boy walked along beside her with an alder branch with leaves on it to brush her back with, to drive off a fly swarm now or then, an attention that Jennie seemed to appreciate.

Lizzie wasn’t so companionable. (She was named for Lizzie Crickett, daughter of Cap’n Fred Crickett who was away at sea most of the time.) Lizzie—the cow—was always relentlessly thrashing her head around at fly swarms, without much care in wielding her long, pointed horns. Not one of these cows wore brass ferrules such as some farmers screwed over the ends of too-pointed horn tips to blunt them.

Nobody then had ever heard of a hornless cow. If one cow had ever even been seen she would have raised a derisive laugh anywhere. If
a cow didn’t have horns she certainly wouldn’t be any good. The horns were just as fitting a necessity on a cow as a tail to switch flies with. But Lizzie, as it happened, swung her massive head too widely inside of the railroad cattle-pass homeward one night and broke off most of her right horn. Thereafter, after the break had healed, she had only a stub of a horn to balance the 15-inch horn on the left, giving her head a one-sided look. Those rock-walled under-railroad cattle passes were rough on swinging-head cattle. They were necessarily narrow due to the overhead load of railroad trains. The width of this pass was but 3 feet, 4 inches.

But now or then the cows hadn’t come up through the pass by 5 o’clock. The youngster would sing out, “Co-boss, Co-boss, come on up!” They might be there just beyond the pass, and then come filing through. But on rare occasions they would not; some special whim held them back in the pasture below.

The pasture comprised about forty acres about twenty of which were pine woods. Then it was a care of hunting them out. The urchin would walk, barefooted, through the dark pass to look over the broad pasture before him. If his charges were not in the sight he would set out along the cattle paths, worn by generations of cattle before these, on a cow hunt. It was quite amazing to note how effectively a dozen or more cattle could bunch up and hide themselves when a boy came looking after them. Sometimes it took half an hour to spy them out in some secluded thicket along the back edge of the pine forest, with another mile or so of tramping through bushes, puddles in clayey bogs, and vaulting over small piles of drying alders. But once found, they would get into motion reasonably enough, if slowly, after their driver had hollered a little, grabbed a horn here or twigged a tail there with a little urging intent. Once started, they would lead as well as drive. It was as if they had hidden away just as a sort of joke on their young driver. Once outside the bars again, however, their interest would perk up. There would be choice provender in their home cribs, and relief in the milking for their aching udders.

Ordinarily at 5 o’clock in the afternoon the cows would have come through this pass under the railroad to bunch up in the widened area about the lane bars to wait for their driver to let them down for the exit out into the road. First would step Christine, the most active young Jersey, then Emma, the truculent red Durham, then Betsy, the black and white Holstein, then ponderous Jennie, and older Jersey, then all the rest of them, with slobbering tongues and switching tails. Each one stepped, without a stumble nor hoof-scrape, over the lowered ends of the bars, a few inches above the ground.

“Found ‘em in that birch thicket, ‘way over next to Canute Hansen’s line,” explained the driver, “Knew where I was ‘cause I heard Canute’s great Dane barking loud off to my left.”

“Y es, I know that corner,” Nat would say, “You better never get over that fence there. That
dog’d eat y’up! He’s bigger’n a hundred-pound calf.”

Then Nat turned to his milking. His wife, Sarah, would strain the milk into big, shallow pans, then later after the cream had risen to the top, another day, she would skim the milk, put the collected cream into a barrel-type churn and Nat would churn it on a Friday and make butter which he would mold and stamp with his initials on every quarter pound. In the process he would have salted it until it was “saltier than the sea.” Then on Saturday he would drive to Yarmouth and market it where it had a ready sale. Everybody, it seemed, liked Nat’s salt butter. They would pay 50 cents a pound for it when other men’s butter was bringing but 40 cents.

No. 7 School, Range Road

This Range-road school was marked, District No. 7, on the marble plate set into the brickwork high above the door along with the date of construction—1846. That was the year of the beginning of the Mexican War. From the beginning a host of Merrills attended it even up to the time of John and Robert, then Halvor and Wayne Merrill as well as Paul, the brother of Robert and John of the Wallace Merrill family who lived at the top of the hill just west above it. Though generally referred to as “No. 7,” it came to be known pretty familiarly as “The Merrill School.” That was where Abigail and Olive, Martha, Lizzie and Edmund Merrill attended it in its earliest years. They came from “over in the field” in the house built coincidentally with the schoolhouse—in the 1850’s. That Merrill home stood a half mile in from The Road at the Cumberland Junction village at the end of a town-maintained dirt road, and only about 150 yards north of the Maine Central railroad. It was occupied not quite a hundred years. After all the Merrills had departed, whilst unoccupied briefly, the hurricane that came up the coast in about 1941 demolished it and unroofed the big barn, leaving all of the buildings in ruin.

Almost curious is the history of these Merrills of the vicinity, who were so ubiquitous. It seems it was the first Samuel Merrill who, in
Civil War Time, organized a whole regiment of recruits in the area to answer Abe Lincoln’s call for volunteers for the Union army. A regiment would generally run to at least 2,000 men. The Army appointed this old-time Samuel the Colonel in command of his regiment. And tradition (thru Lizzie Merrill Hay) had it that in training and in the Field of Operations, down Chattanooga-way, when the regiment gathered for mail call more than half of them answered to the name of Merrill.

But there were others, of course, who went to No. 7 School. There were Allens, and Sawyers (a few) and Browns (3 girls) and Thurston’s (3 or 4) and Goulds and Youngs as well as the Danes of the Hansen, Christensen, and Hanson varieties. Jones was another name that occurs—Arthur Jones, a stoutish boy from Salisbury, Mass. He was about 18 years of age in 1898 and assigned to about the 2nd Grade. There were the usual complications over this phenomenon of a grown adult among youngsters hardly half his age. Grace Merrill was the teacher at this rather trying time. The Superintendent took a hand here, and got Mr. Jones transferred somewhere, and presently he betook himself out of town back to the Bay State somewhere. Nobody ever heard from him again, though he left a bicycle stored in Nate Merrill’s barn.

At those evening spelling schools, which were largely attended for the local population, they delighted in having propounded by the leader such words as “Aaron, (‘Great A, little a, r o n!’); Llewellyn, (‘Double ell e, double U, e dou- ble ell, y n!’)” Said in a rhythmic monotone that was pretty comical, but correct as the dictionary could make it.) Then, “Syzygy,” (Syzygy”, said as fast as one could say the letters). That gave
an impressive and dizzying performance. Those old spelling schools were FUN, believe it or not! The writer was brought up among those old sticklers and enthusiasts; and the old spirit is still with him. Never had so much fun watching a movie as being catechised by Edmund or Olive or Lizzie Merrill in spelling! Words like “Memosyne,” fuchsia, and “eleemosynary.” And the speller’d better be sure he could define the word, too! If he couldn’t he’d likely go sit back down. One miss and he was out!

“Still sits the schoolhouse by the road,
A ragged beggar sunning.”

There was a long list of teachers, of course, who taught at No. 7. Back in the earliest days, to the early 1860’s, Master Starbird was in charge. He was the master who told the unruly boys in the back seats that he had eyes in the back of his head. The Merrills reported that he was a strict Disciplinarian, (capital D.) Those must have been rough times. They were times when cordwood was delivered by the Town to feed…on cold winter days. After a cord or two of the 4-foot…piled up in the yard, the teacher appointed first one…the bigger boys to go out, during session hours, to…for a half-hour stint on the new wood-pile, sawing the…into 2-foot lengths for the box stove. When the pile…boys took similar turn at tiering the stove-wood up…the entry. There were days, too, when the sawyers used early snow-fall drifted down upon them and the saw-horses…—say, from the 1880’s—there were such teachers as Miss Olive Merrill, who was plenty strict, too. Some people called her stubborn on this or that idea. To them she would respond, “I don’t call it stubborn; I call it firm.” In any case it was as inflexible as a hardwood ruler, and nobody ever got her to abandon an adopted position. Maybe that was why, in the yearly town report, the Superintendent observed that Miss Merrill kept a well-ordered school.

Following Miss Olive came Gertrude Merrill (of the Range Road Merrill) then Grace Merrill from the Center (who later married Charlie Jenkins) then Miss Hattie Humphrey who, after a year or two, married another Jones, and went to Yarmouth to live. Then Elizabeth Colley from North Falmouth; and, later, Evelyn Thurston who had been one of her pupils ten years previously had graduated from Greely and come back to teach at No. 7, along about 1912.

Tuttle Road School

There was another school, up until quite recent years when it was rebuilt into a dwelling house, known as the Weeks’ Hill School. It was down on Tuttle Road, a few rods north and across the road from the Methodist Church. A hundred years ago, or so, there was a lady teacher there whose chief aim, apparently, had been to Please all the parents of the area. It was said that she succeeded so well, through extra-permissiveness toward the pupils, that the fond parents regarded her as the Indispensable. But the town superintendent, who found the whole brood of youngsters running wild, felt quite differently about it. Then he sought to displace her somehow—anyhow!

Eben Ramsdell, a very tall young man, only recently discharged from the Union Army, was appointed as the teacher. He was one of those who had survived the Civil War, and was well respected along the Foreside as a bookish sort of person. But they did not know him so well around Weeks’ Hill. When the superintendent had transferred the lady elsewhere the local women were especially incensed at the change. They had quite a scene with the superintendent about it. But tall Eben went ahead with his
school plans. He arrived early on the opening Monday morning to see if the neighborhood women had properly cleaned the place up and put it in order. They had, and left only this gem scrawled in chalk on the blackboard:

“I saw the Devil flying South
With long-legged Ramsdell in his mouth;
But he turned ‘round and dropped the fool
And left him here to teach our school.”

With a send-off like that he just couldn’t help being alert to everything going on; and he somehow managed to become quite a success as school-master. By another year Uncle Sam, who had put in a new post office at Falmouth Foreside, tagged the tall Eben for postmaster. He filled this position up to his demise in 1896. In this Government assignment he raised a tuft of chin whiskers just like those worn during the War years by Abraham Lincoln, just as all the Southern Postmasters still pattern theirs in the style of Jefferson Davis’s.

One should not neglect the Church. Like most New England towns, in early days as well as late, its denomination was, and is, Congregational. With proper and timely maintenance and improvements this old church building had served Cumberland people for 177 years. In the late 1700’s it appears that it was quite an exertion to attend, in whole families as they did. When the weather was rough, in winter and mud-time in spring, people came afoot and horseback for miles and miles around. In the warmer and dryer months they came just the same, but in lighter spirits, though they listened to long, tedious sermons from devoted ministers. And with no heat in the building. Some brought foot warmers, heated stones and the like to help them endure the hostile cold. Reading some of those long old sermons, as one may from some ancient tome, gives an idea of the heroic endurance of those who sought the way to God through the organization provided. A vestry was made from an early town Fair building that saw much use after the Fair location had been moved to the West End of town and up until the second decade of this century. It was the scene of the annual Harvest Supper for the Center, for one thing. The affair was largely and enthusiastically attended always. But the old vestry fell into disuse as the Parish House, nearer the Church, came into being. Among the preachers who read The Word here many will remember the Rev. Perry of the 1880’s, Rev. Davis of the early ’90’s, Rev. P. E. Miller of the early 1900’s, Mr. Townsend of about 1912—’14 and others up to date.

Contemporary with No. 7 School in the Cumberland Lower Village was No. 3 at the Center. Its brick building was built of bricks made from clay taken from a clay deposit in the slope of Morse’s hill just west of the Morse home, now owned and occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Chase. No. 3 served the wide area around the Center far and near. Only after Consolidation, about 1951, was it discontinued as a school but chosen for a town office which it is today. The old Townhouse on Upper Tuttle
Road was razed and a town fire station was built in its place. For twenty-four years Harold Bragg served as Fire Chief. He still operates the Chase Greenhouse and florist establishment. It stands at the corner of Farwell Street and Main.

Cumberland Town Office (former School No. 3)

Greely Institute was Eliphalet Greely’s gift to Higher Education a hundred years ago. “All of us” it seems, have been to this old High School, the next step in academic education beyond the Elementary Schools of the town. Students came to Greely from Shawtown, from No. 7, No. 3, from Weeks’ Hill and from surrounding towns as well.

Greely Institute students, 1939

Comparative figures from two representative classes of Greely Institute and High School over 62 years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1908</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. Graduated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia Legrow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mildred Leighton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elmira Merrill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carl Norton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Floyd Norton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evelyn Thurston—Valedictorian</td>
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Greely Institute, 1904

In the 1880’s and 1890’s it was said that there wasn’t a household in Cumberland that hadn’t contributed at least one member to the sea-faring occupation. The town and the County shores were washed by the ocean. It was most natural that many young men should be drawn to the sea, its romance, and its varied, if hazardous activities. It offered a way out of what youth often looked upon as a hum-drum existence that offered little to stimulate their imaginations. To the adventurous farm life did not appeal. Horatio Herrick was one of these. He lived at the foot of Morse’s Hill on the east side of the Main Road. His father, Charles, spent many years at sea.

But there was the farm, with his mother and sister, Laura, living on it, and somebody had to carry on the maintenance work. Horatio stayed but always looked to the time when he could go to sea in ships. He read all the sea stories he could get, and liked to talk about “blue water” where the decks heaved under a sailor’s feet. He could tie any kind of sailor’s knot, and all around the farm were samples of his knot-tying handiwork. Even his horses’ hitching weights, thrown down from the wagons whilst he did errands in the village, were tied to their lines with a bowline. The big hay fork, hung from the great beams of the barn, operated by
a rope with a sailor’s running splice in it to ease its passage through the pulleys. And he would gladly name for you every rope on a square-rigged ship. He lived in the square-rigger era. He was born in 1864.

Horatio Herrick

Horatio was a rather tall man. He had a natural talent like that of a smart lawyer. He was always in demand for any local talent show which the community put on. He got into the spirit of a part as few men could do. He took to such things as foreign and ancient languages in a manner to put to shame his local contemporaries; and in any dramas portrayed in town hall or vestry he was pretty sure to be the star.

In the late 1890’s Charles Herrick came home from the sea, his health impaired from tropical favors and unable to sail again. Neither could he do much to aid in carrying on the farm; thus Horatio continued, unmarried and unaided, as his father sank into invalidism. In about twenty years he finally died when Horatio was approaching sixty. The strain of caring for the old man had told heavily upon the mother, and she, in turn, went into a decline. Horatio’s sister, Laura, had married Archie Wyman and gone to the Wyman home on Tuttle Road. From this union came the Wyman twins, Mildred and Margaret. On his mother’s account Horatio continued to maintain their way of life. Nursing homes hadn’t been “invented.” Each family looked after its own. Thus it devolved upon Horatio largely to look after another invalid. Her decline was more taxing than had been her husband’s. And when she died Horatio was 65 years of age, too old to face gale-blown seas sweeping across a heaving deck.

The sister and her daughters had helped out all possible during his mother’s illness, wearing well the half-mile trail through the Drowne woods and fields from the Wyman home. When the old lady died all Horatio had left were dreams—of starlit nights on lonely decks with only the swish of waves up for’ard and the slatting of booms with shifts of the helm. His heart was still out there on the deep. These were the things he talked about to the end of his days, which came in his eighties.

These were in the latter shipbuilding days, in Cumberland as well as Yarmouth, Cumberland, at its Town Landing site, with fewer facilities built around 50 ships, among them the “Grape Shot,” that set a record in sailing around Cape Horn. In the century from 1793 to 1893 fifty seven of the Cumberland sailors were lost at sea or died in foreign ports. Life at sea in square-rigger days was rough, no less than in the time of Richard Dana of “Two Years Before the Mast.”

Many Went to Sea, and Some Came Back

Around Wiscasset, Yarmouth, Searsport and Cumberland one can still see homes built by former sea captains who “made it.” It was, as was indicated, a rough life, but to the ships’ masters who had generally fortunate voyages it sometimes paid exceedingly well—for the times. One of those who went, and came back poor, was Capt. David Wilson.

Captain David had it hard, all the way along. Even in his youth. He was born in 1818 of a poor family. He was even “bound out” for a time and suffered cruel treatment from grasping, unprincipled people. This sort of practical slavery was not designed to induce faith in gen-
erous human nature. He was disheartened by life ashore, and so he headed for a life afloat. He walked to Portland, 12 miles, sought out a sea captain on a wharf and asked him for a job. He got it, but not as a sailor as he hoped, but as a ship's cook. But he was game, and took it. For the year he served as cook he soaked up considerable know-how.

The Cap’n befriended him and took him to Orrington to send to school with his own boys. In later life David gave great credit to his benefactor, and he made the most of the two years he thus got at school.

He studied navigation, and became a captain at 29; and so continued until he left the sea many years later. He sailed to Europe, to the West Indies, and to all the chief ports of the world. It was said of him that, in spite of a rough, harsh exterior, he was always ready to lend a helping hand to anyone in a hard place. He once boarded a vessel whose crew was stricken with yellow fever, a scourge of the tropics. He remained aboard as long as he could do any good, burying the dead and caring for the sick at risk of his own life. But somehow he survived.

Those were the days of long voyages. Cap’n David told, amongst other vicissitudes, of beating in from Cuba for forty days, getting almost into harbor, then being blown out to sea again by gales repeatedly.

The ships were, as indicated, square-riggers. There was no engine aboard to pull them out of trouble when beleaguered from any cause. The wind was the only power-source the ship had—a dangerous circumstance when approaching the rocks and ledges of the northern New England coast.

Cap’n David came ashore late in life, as he thought in good circumstances; but trouble followed him there. He lost most of his property through the failure of his former employers. Ship-masters usually invested money in their employing company; but the Nat Blanchard Shipping Company failed, through reverses of one kind or another, and Cap’n David lost thousands of dollars through his investment. This made the difference between wealth and its reverse.

He did as well as he could for a growing brood of grandchildren, furnishing them a plot of ground to till, and further produce of his own which he, himself, raised on his little place in Cumberland Center. To add to his afflictions he became blind in his later years.

Among his grandchildren still living are: Mrs. Rita McCloskey of Wakefield, Mass., Mrs. Gertrude Yates of Bangor, Mrs. Leila Straw of Portland, Mrs. Hazel McGoff of Cumberland Center, Miss Ernestine Norton of Cambridge, Mass. and Floyd Norton of Yarmouth.

There were more stories of extraordinary hardship in the lives of sailors of the old wind-jammer days than from any other class of people or any other calling: of ships becalmed down in the horse latitudes, running out of water and provisions for weeks at a stretch, of men washed overboard in heavy seas, some floating around in pork barrels until picked up by other ships, of ships sailing into Portland Harbor in winter, every man with a hatchet in the rigging aloft chopping feverishly frozen spray from every spar and line to keep the vessel from sinking, cargo and all, from the sheer weight of the heavy coating of ice, men falling from the crow’s nest to the deck. And these were the men who
would go “down to the sea in ships.” They saw and knew the wonders of the deep; and they paid their price for it. Some of those old boys had stories to tell that were plausible enough to a boy—who might be hearing the truth—but would meet disbelief from older persons, particularly if the latter were limited in experience by a much-sheltered life.

Around the Portland waterfront they used to tell a story of Capt’n David Wilson who boarded his ship preparatory to sailing to find his crew in a mutinous mood. They weren’t going to sail under the conditions (which were similar to those on any ship of the time) and one met the Cap’n at the rail to air his views. Cap’n David put him in his place with a well-aimed blow from a hard fist, and that place was in the scuppers. Another tangled at once with the Cap’n, thinking to catch him off guard. This second man landed up around the foot of the mainmast nicely curled around it. A third dissenter landed in a heap up beside the forward hatch, wholly hors-de-combat. One after another tried their luck against Cap’n David’s fists until there wasn’t an able-bodied man left. Then the Cap’n took off his shirt and waved it in a big circle around his head—a universal signal, on anybody’s ship, of distress.

A Navy cutter, anchored off seaward about a cable’s-length, put out a small boat full of sailors who rowed it to Cap’n David’s ship. A lieutenant came aboard and took a look around the deck, noting the out-of-combat status of the crew. Then he spoke up, “What are you planning to do, Cap’n?”

“Do—do?” echoed Cap’n David, “Why, I’m going to put to sea—if you fellows will just help me make sail.”

The Navy men set his sails for him, and the ship, with Cap’n David at the helm, put to sea. When the common daze was over, the sailors came to and took their places to sail the ship as normal.

Wilson is standing at the left of this group.

The other two people were tenants of his who, for two or three years, lived in the nearer end of the house—Mrs. Margaret Chamberlain and her son, Edward. At the time of this photo, Capt. David was only partially blind. He became completely so within a year, and died in 1905. The house was destroyed by a fire a few years later. The foundations of the house were, like those of all the old, substantial houses of that time, of faced granite slabs. In 1921 the Prince Memorial Library was built on the same site on the same foundation stones used in the construction of the David Wilson house.

This fine library, enlarged later by the Paul Merrill addition, took the place of the old lending library housed for a time in the Fred Adams house next south of the blacksmith shop. Cora Adams had served as a librarian during the last years of the 1890’s and into the 1900’s.

Much credit is due to the untiring work of Mrs. Harriet (Wallace) Merrill in selection and stocking this library in her capacity of Book Committee and Board Member.
Another Sea-Captain Who Came Back

A typical, and generally most successful, mariner born in Cumberland in 1803, was Capt. Joseph Blanchard. His father, Nathaniel, was a mariner before him, but was drowned off Jewell’s Island in Casco Bay at age 52.

Joseph, with “a good common-school education,” went to sea when he was 14. In four years he had become 2nd Mate. He studied navigation assiduously; then in another year he was made 1st Mate of the brig “Echo” and then he was made Captain in his early twenties. From that point on, his life reads like a James Fenimore Cooper novel.

He sailed the “Echo” from Portland, Me. to Charleston, S.C., thence to Cowes on the Island of Wight with a load of rice; thence to Antwerp, Belgium. From there he sailed the brig “Rebecca” to Trinidad, Isle of Cuba, following this with two voyages to Europe. Then, swapping back to the “Echo” again, he sailed back to Havana. On his return he was wrecked on Cape Cod, losing the vessel, cargo and one man. Then he set sail again on the brig “Freighter,” to Guadeloupe, then two more trips to Europe.

On his own he built to ships—the Cornelia and the United States in which he sailed many voyages.

Capt. Joe was versatile. He picked up foreign languages as he went along, and was considered especially fluent in French. He made in all thirty trips to Europe, and found time between them to make more trips to the West Indies than any other Maine mariner, to the number of 84.

The Telephone Comes To Town

The telephone was a little late in coming to Cumberland. Massachusetts had a system already installed at the Turn of the Century when the Northeastern put up its poles and lines in our area. It lasted only briefly. In hardly more than a year the New England Telephone Company bought them out and still serve the area around-about.

For the first three years, or thereabouts, the local Central Office was housed on the second
floor of the J. L. Dunn Store building. It was still there in early 1910. Then, with Lester Bragg, a former foreman, as Manager, Lineman and Switchboard man the Central was moved into this house which had once been the residence of Silas Rideout who was practically an old man when the Civil War was fought. An ell was built on, at the left, to house the switchboard and serve as the local office.

Mr. Bragg married Gertrude Merrill, once teacher at No. 7 School. He brought with him two sons by a former marriage—Ned and Harold—both below teen age at that time. Both of these boys are still around: Ned, the elder, runs a home manufacturing business, and Harold, who learned the florists’ trade, runs the Chase Greenhouse on Upper Main Street. He coincidentally served as Town Fire Chief for 24 years, and is one of the most genial and knowledgeable men of the whole town. Ned, his elder brother, had also served previously for a time in the same capacity.

Miss Harriet Merrill, sister of Ed Merrill of the Range Road family, served here as switchboard operator for much of the time until 1953 when the changeover was made to the dial system through Portland.

This house is now the home of Wayne and Velma Merrill. Wayne is a teacher in the Gray-New Gloucester High School, and his wife, Velma manages in the former telephone office el an agency of the Deering Realty Company.

From along in the 1890’s up through the 1920’s the James L. Dunn General Store was the chief retail trading establishment at Cumberland Center. It was a store and Post office combined, conveniently located about 40 yards south of the 4-corners intersection of Main Street, the Tuttle Road and Blanchard Road. For many years George Jordan was postmaster, then later his wife, Nellie, served in the same position.

This store-and-post office combination made it the busiest place at the Center. The Dunn store carried a wider variety of things than any other country store. In the rear section was an extensive grain and feed compartment. A side street in from the Main Road gave access to the grain store. Wagons would come in to load up with food for farm animals and poultry, and go out along the little road passing by the Townhouse out to Tuttle Road and thence homeward. Jim Dunn sold a lot of grain from this end of the store. He had two men working for him to aid in this end.

In the front end were the usual groceries, medicines and household appliances and notions, cracker barrels, sugar and such. His trade profited much from the post office callers. Everybody—in the '90's—called there for their mail. There was no R.F.D. until 1900.
just as long as mail-carrying trains ran to carry it, up into the ’40’s somewhere. After Richard Anderson’s retirement Woodbury Hamilton met the mail trains. And he met them, even though a blizzard had, overnight, drifted the roads full of snow that no horse-sled or vehicle could negotiate.

We saw him slogging his way on snowshoes over deep drifts with a mail bag or two stuffed under his arms. Though over 70 years of age he made many such trips in blowing clouds of snow that cut visibility to less than twenty feet. One might wonder how many “white collar” city men would have been as zealous at such a task as Old Woody was over that mile-and-a-quarter course with snow piled up from 2 to 6 feet along a road that couldn’t even be seen for a hundred yards at a stretch. The city men wouldn’t even have gone to their shiny offices at such times. “Woody” had a string of children some of which became city office people but they say that, in point of years, he outlived them all.

Ed Osgood with winter cart

Jim Dunn, too, reached pretty well into longevity. He was always active, and he, too, outlived his children in point of age. He was the fairest with small boys who got into scrapes now or then of any of the tradesmen of the village. For there were two or three other stores, too. Like Ed Osgood’s small grocery in connection with his packing plant. He was no man for mischievous kids to tamper with. They cut holes in the canvas sides of two of his meat wagons and splashed paint on them one Halloween night, but Ed could see—in the dark, it seems. Result? Six boys, the culprits, spent a good part of the next day patching holes and cleaning canvas—or their parents paid $10.00 apiece—to put those meat wagons into clean shape and ready for the road again. Ed packed too much weight with his 3 cwt. to tempt boys to vandalism again.

All through the 1890’s and early 1900’s carpenters were busy. Few were more so than the Hulits and the LeGrows of the Shawtown area who lived across the “Rangeway” from each other. Rufus LeGrow, the father of Lydia LeGrow who, later, married Fred Robinson, the own road commissioner, wore a voluminous side-whisker beard that resembled Chester A. Arthur’s as a distinguishing mark. His brother John was more distinguished by a vivid imagination who, between strokes of adze and handsaw, wove stories that would, at times, cause a work stoppage among the rest of the crew who listened to his weird tales. John also chewed tobacco copiously, giving his stories effective punctuation with his occasional “P-tu!” at appropriate junctures in his recitals. Nobody could ignore these. You just had to listen.

He told his yarns with a straight poker face, not changing a muscle at his amazing impossibilities. Once, however, he became so overcome with the ludicrousness of a retailed situation that he choked on it. That was the time he swallowed his cud. He strangled, spluttered, then grew dizzy. It took about a quart of water from the big jug nearby to rinse that one down so his system could handle it. As he yanked the oversize cork out of the snout it emitted a loud, deep-toned, “BUNG!” Why else did they always call it the bung-stopper? After that episode John was quiet for ‘most ten minutes.

Of this carpenter crew Seymour Hulit was less loquacious, but a fast builder who made the chips fly. He retailed no nonsense, and he could judge a board angle without use of the T-square most of the time. His brother, Sam, worked the
home place with its 50 arable acres. He, too, was quiet, a little stouter than his brothers, and not likely to be hoodwinked by any cheap pedlar or “salesman” who might descend now or then upon the country dwellers.

One such, in store clothes and driving an express wagon, arrived on a spring day to confront Sam who sat in one of the side doors of the barn passageway. Sam appeared to the caller to be getting old. His hair was white, and his movements were deceptively slow. The “salesman” spoke a glib piece about some “remarkable bargains” in the long rolls of linoleum he hauled in his wagon. Sam sat there, blinking at the city rhetoric, saying nothing. The intruder, seemingly settled at the lack of response, began to resort to ridicule as a persuader. He apparently had to do something to wake this “character” up.

“I say, Old Man, do you keep that gun—there leaning against that brace—to scare people off who come to call?”

Sam kept on saying nothing. Then the intruder informed him, “I’m not scared of any old gun. You couldn’t hit anything with it if you tried.”

Just at that moment, as incidents have a way of becoming coincidence, a Killy-hawk, on probable lookout for some stray chicken, swooped over the house to alight in a tall young elm a good 100 yards back of the building. Sam silently reached behind him for the big rifle leaning against a brace, then stopped out away from the porch a few yards and rammed an enormous cartridge into the breech of the 45-70 which was big enough for an elephant gun. Over the roof he drew a bead on the Killy-hawk for just an instant. Then he pulled the trigger. The little hawk seemed but to jiggle a bit when the “cannon” roared.

“There, I told you,” exulted the ungracious pedlar, “You have never touched him. He’s still sitting there in the tree!” On an impulse he ran around the end of the house and down the slope; then by means of the well-spaced limbs he climbed up high into the tree. The hawk didn’t move, and the climber noted that the big bullet had completely gutted the bird, leaving just the head and feathers hanging in the tree.

When the climber had come down and around the corner of the house Sam was calmly ramming a wad of wasp’s nest through the gun barrel. The visitor made no further jibes; he just turned the wagon about and drove out into the road with a rather dazed manner, and forgot to call at any of the next three houses.

Town Meetin’ Days

Town Meeting Day, with its 3 inches of new snow and clearing March skies, was the Big Day of all the year for the politically minded of the town. From the vantage point of Edmund Merrill’s farm, a good place to see the preparations, the excitement, the hopeful promise that it brought, a small boy felt the importance of the event. The small boy did the extra chores, like carrying forty or fifty pails of water from the gulley spring up over the rather steep, slippery slope the 40 yards to the barn. Sometimes even forty pailfuls of water would slake the thirst of a dozen cows and a horse; but on cold, snowy days they seemed to demand an extra five or ten pails. Edmund hadn’t got around, in 1902, to installing a wood-shed pump yet to make the watering trips to the barn, and the kitchen, too, easier. He didn’t do that until 1904 when the boy had grown bigger and stronger.

On this March 3rd the household was astir by five o’clock in the morning. It was always astir by five, even by four if it happened to be a
cold morning, running to 20 below on the N.E. corner of the house where the thermometer was mounted, within easy sight from inside the buttery window. It would be pretty cold in the linto on such mornings, the cows ready to get up from their cold, though sawdusted, plank floor. But this was an extra-special morning. There was a guest in the house. Mr. Edward Ross, Selectman resident of Chebeague Island, was over for the Town Meeting. He always stopped at Edmund Merrill’s overnight. The morning boat from Chebeague didn’t come over early enough to land a man on the mainland in time for the early Meeting procedures; so Mr. Ross came over the night before on a boat that made a good train connection in the city for Cumberland Junction.

Recreation of an early Town Meeting

Edmund, with his longish, iron grey whiskers, was, off and on, a selectman too. As such he was Overseer of the Poor—when there were any and quite a factotum in town affairs. When he wasn’t Selectman he was tax-collector, or something. These two men were born to be cronies, it seemed. They hit it off like peas in a pod, agreeing volubly on the way to dispose of Article 3, or 12, or 17, as published in the Town Report some days before.

Edmund was of slightly less statue than Edward—that was Mr. Ross—and his beard, his most striking feature, didn’t quite come up to that of the Island man’s. For Mr. Ross wore a beard as long as Hiram Ricker’s of Poland Water fame. But Hiram Ricker’s was brown in color, and Mr. Ross’s was solid black. That was the most imposing beard seen in those parts through the 90’s and early 1900’s. When Mr. Ross straightened up his whole six feet which were dominated by a beard ever better and bigger than that of Pirate Blackbeard, the whole assembly were hushed and impressed, and they voted as Mr. Ross intended to vote. You couldn’t expect them to do otherwise. There was no gainsaying a front like that!

To the smallish boy on the Merrill farm Mr. Ross was imposing, all right, yet somehow almost a shade disappointing. Now Uncle Edmund’s tall leather boots squeaked pretty well when he walked the length of the kitchen floor; but Mr. Ross’s equally tall, and better polished, leather boots squeaked loudly, compellingly! The boy followed the guest around whenever he could, just to get the benefit of the loud squeak from the Island man’s boots. Now those boots squeaked! That was the way the leathery boots ought to sound; and when their wearer wore the biggest, blackest beard he ever saw—that man ought not to be putting around with figures, and town budgets and such; what a swell pirate he would have made! ‘Twas too bad he had to grub around in a town’s business. He would have looked more fitting on the deck of a battered square-rigger flying the Jolly Roger at the masthead! And such was the Island Selectman to the boy who watered the Merrill kine. As the boy grew older, and less enthralled with the idea of pirates, he developed a different, more respectful, attitude toward the imposing representative of Chebeague Island, the largest island in Casco Bay.

Chebeague Island

Edmund Merrill was, we may recall, of that family of Merrills who weren’t “stubborn,”
they were just firm, you understand. When their generation had been young—back in the Civil War years—they had all joined the Good Templars Lodge. They took their oaths with dead seriousness. Throughout their lives thereafter they were as firm in their Lodge principles as a granite ledge on Edmund’s old farm was firm. They would no more have taken a drink of liquor of any kind than they would have borne false witness, even under duress. No more would one of them have taken a smoke or a chew of tobacco. One of their near relatives, in a slightly farther back town, who had become a deacon in his country church wound up every mid-week prayer meeting with a recital that punctuated the testimonial session with finality. This was his recital:

“Terbacker is a filthy weed
And from the Devil it did seed;
It burns yer pockets, stains yer clothes,
And makes a chimbley of yer nose.”

That was the signal for the meeting to break up and go home. There was nothing more to be said.

Edmund had still another, elder, sister whom we neglected to mention previously. Her name was Dorcas Ann. She was the wife of the elongated Eben Ramsdell who had taught at the Weeks’ Hill school that one year. She was so “firm” that she used to break stout sticks up over the back of her erring grandson who, at age 7, was so noisy as to be heard now or then. For Dorcas Ann children were not meant to be heard.

The Cumberland Fair had its beginnings about 1873 at Cumberland Center when Edmund Merrill was young and an enthusiastic worker for the project. But West Cumberland wanted the Fair over there. When they put it up to vote the next year the “West End” won out. Edmund was pretty mad—er, firm about it. ‘Twa’n’t fittin’ to move it out of the Center. Though he lived more than forty years after that he never set foot again in the Cumberland Fair—never once in West Cumberland!

Then on this snowy Monday of March 3rd of 1902 seventy five percent of the townsmen repaired to “Town Meetin’ in the brick Townhouse, down back of Arno Chase’s greenhouse. Sleighs and pungs stood around in all possible places, even extending down into a small orchard that bordered the Tuttle Road. (We would have said “parked,” but the word “park” had not yet come into use as a verb.) The Townhouse was full of milling voters in a cloud of cigar smoke handling printed name slips according to their choices of candidates for town officers—like E. H. Trickey for 1st Selectman, or Charles Small for tax collector, etc. Frank Merrill was swinging the mallet as Moderator and doing a good job of it, for Frank Merrill knew his Parliamentary Law.

The remainder of the men of the town were about small tasks that had to be attended to, come ‘Town Meetin’ or high water, like feeding 1002 chickens, or 93 geese and 19 turkeys.
Some of these men would come struggling in later, to see if the Town would raise $800.00 to buy one of the new snow rollers for the highways or elect Nellie Jordan for Town Clerk for the ensuing year, even if she couldn’t vote, since the incumbent had had the job so long it was getting monotonous. Arno Chase, at 10 Am, was in his greenhouse nearby putting up two or three cardboard boxes of cut flowers for shipment to New York on the noon train, carefully wrapped with tissue to prevent freezing whilst enroute by sleigh to the Junction station.

Arno Chase

His brother, Frank, in his bigger greenhouse up SHE Street, was doing similar with a huge box of carnation pinks for Boston. “Danny” Jenkins, the tallest man in the County, was likewise hurrying to pack a big order of out-of-season flowers for two Portland florists, and Howard Blanchard, up in the Sunnyside Greenhouses on Blanchard Road, was readying for shipment another consignment of large chrysanthemums for another New England market.

A few of the outlying farmers who were diffident voters were down to the Junction grain store of George W. Jordan with horse-sleds loading up for the week on gluten, bran middlings and whole corn. Then as each double-runner sled slipped past on the snowy Main Road homeward three or four urchins of the railroad village were out practicing catch-on, gaining footholds on the broad runners when the drivers whipped up their horses, only to hop off again inside of thirty yards to catch on to the next heavy sled—just as railroad trainmen hooked on to car-side grab-irons to swing gracefully aboard the low steps of caboose or rear end passenger coach with the train pulling out at 20 miles per hour—or even 30. When those boys grew up they were going to be brakemen and conductors, too, and be always and forever concerned with “getting out of town” whichever town it might be. They were going to travel, see “something different,” when they got big. They did not then know that every town—clear west to the Rocky Mountains—was so like every other one that there was as much monotony in change as there would be right at home, which later life would so prove to them.

Even though there was a Town Meetin’ on, the railroad was still running forty trains a day through the Junction and generally eight-to-ten-year-old urchins were not interested in the possible hassle over Article 9, printed in the current Town Report. It was a heap more fun to play catch-on with moving horse-sleds, or skip over the running-strip along the tops of side-tracked box cars, right where the brakemen ran or walked when the cars were in a real train, and in motion, “getting out of town.”

Chase Bros. flower wagon

Nat Cole didn’t go to Town Meetin’ either. He had to be home should some drummer with sample case drop off from a passenger train wanting to be driven up to Gray, or over to Yarmouth or Falmouth or Freeport, perhaps. Every
railroad village had a Nat Cole, or his counter-part, who had “the best dad-gummed place in the whole town.”

When ‘Town Meetin’ was over Edmund and Edward, of the ferocious black beard, drove “Old Chip” the reddish horse to the station to catch the 5 o’clock train into the city in proper time to make good connection across town via trolley with the evening steamboat to Chebeague. After a hard day at ‘Town Meetin’ his tall boots still squeaked wonderfully as he walked the platform to take the train with its lighted cars.

**Our Periodic Itinerants**

On a summer day, apart from an occasional tin peddler’s wagon, a black-sided/paneled wagon would appear in our midst with gilt picture-frames and a tinted portrait or two hanging on pegs on its sides. That was Chester Rideout and his photograph-gallery and portrait shop. He was no relation of the Cumberland Rideouts, it appeared, but he would pull his old horse up into a halt on the side of our railroad village green, and wait a few moments until some of the women of the community had gathered about the equipage and stare at the gilt-framed, tinted portraits displayed thereon. Chester was a portly man with quite huge side whiskers that reminded one of Chester A. Arthur, maybe. He would take one’s photograph, maybe several somebodies’, then retire into his black wagon at the rear door and shut it—tight! Then he was in a darkroom. Inside of ten or fifteen minutes he would emerge with finished photographs affixed to cardboard rectangles, at 25 cents per print.

Or he would take anyone’s choice photograph from one of the households right along with him, and within two weeks would mail the original with an accurate, tinted portrait of the subject back to the customer—if he didn’t make a return trip with his wagon in a fortnight—and deliver the portrait in an oval, gilt frame a foot or more tall, all for about $2.50 to be hung from a sitting room wall for years and years as long as the family endured. Many families had such portraits of their members thus hanging from walls within the houses, a sample of the handiwork or Mr. Chester Rideout whose own likeness in a big oval frame graced a side of his black wagon. The customer paid for the promised work of art upon order; and he or she always got the picture within two or three weeks. That was why Mr. Rideout, of the hirsute foliage, was always welcome, once every year.

There was a tin peddler or two, just now or then, with no noticed regularity in incidence. His wagon looked and sounded a little more attractive than Chester Rideout’s dark-room on wheels. As such an equipage came up over the railroad crossing from the direction of the city the tin pans, dippers, cooking pots and funnels made quite a musical jangling to inform the neighborhood that you could buy that tin utensil that you had been wanting for about ten cents right at the wagon now pulled up at the edge of the green. This man, nondescript in get-up usually, would sell quite a lot of his wares—of which that covered wagon was stacked full, more or less. He was cheerful, joked with the women pleasantly, doled out the dippers and coffee-pots, and was gone in half an hour headed for Cumberland Center proper where a lot of trade awaited him, people said.

Then there was the fruit vender, Lorenzo Valente. He came around about once a week, right up to the freezing-time of November. On
his express wagon, drawn by a woebegone-looking horse, he had as big a variety of citrus, tropical and temperate zone fruits as you could get in the city. He came down the Range Road, and as he turned into our cross-road he would sing out in ringing, Italian tones, “Poll Pine Padernazzi!” And the village knew that the bananas and melons and oranges had arrived. Everybody bought of Valente. He was a genuine immigrant, always genial, and spoke our language pretty well though in a distinct dialect. Some of his jokes were a little obscure to some of us, but no more cheerful peddler ever came to make the rounds all through the warmer months. We had learned three Italian words from his loud, “Poll Pine Padernazzi!” They will long be remembered by anyone who ever heard him sing them out; but none of us ever had any good notion of just what they meant.

The Village Smithy

Under a spreading chestnut tree (wrote Longfellow), The Village Smithy stands..."

Fred Adams Blacksmith shop and metal firehouse, c. 1920

So it did, generally. But by 1900 the chestnut trees of Cumberland were on the wane. Over the blacksmith shop two tall elms towered. Otherwise it followed the pattern of ‘most every other smithy in ‘most every other town in Maine. Our blacksmith shop stood as the second building south of the Congregational Church. We shall have to include the long shed of horse stalls as the first. Just below the shop stood the house in which, for some years around 1900, Fred Adams, the smith, lived, and where his wife, Cora, kept the lending library which served the town until 1921 when the new Prince Memorial Library was built. At about that time the Adam’s moved into the first house north of the church, just across Blanchard Road.

Fred Adams

The blacksmith shop, really on the corner next the church, was where everybody of the town, almost, came to get their horses newly shod, where, too, Fred Adams heated in the forge new iron tires and applied them to buggy and cart wheels that the wheelwright upstairs had built or repaired. Since the townsmen had to wait around for the shoeing of their horses an hour or so at a call, a few old chairs were provided for them to sit on; and from these vantage points the important and less important topics of the day were discussed, laughed over, and disposed of quite conclusively.

“And children coming home fro school
Looked in at the open door;
They loved to see the flaming forge
And hear the bellows roar...”

We couldn’t tell the story better than that. That was it, exactly. And Fred Adams was the hard-working, congenial type of smith:

“His brow was wet with honest sweat;
He earns whate’er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man.”
And that was Fred Adams, a man to emulate in many ways. Nobody who lived in the town in his times will ever forget the [man].

The old smithy is gone now, and so are the horse-sheds under which the patiently waiting horses stood, with or without blankets according to the weather, until Church services had come to an end, and the church-goers had come out and turned their wagons and buggies homeward. Thoughtfully and reverently they seemed to drive.

Thus in 1900 to 1905 at least. No automobile had appeared yet; only in 1903 did articles and pictures of horseless carriages appear in the Literary Digest, the current events magazine that appeared on the sitting-room tables of such families as the Nat Coles and the James L. Dunns. Webb Dyer, over the next to the Falmouth line (now the Winn Road) was the first owner of an automobile in Cumberland. He bought it—a one-cylindereed Cadillac—about 1905. Since automobiles were terribly expensive, even up to $1000.00 in price sometimes, they quickly became status symbols; and Webster Dyer, then, was regarded as just about the town's wealthiest man. The boy who worked around his farm during the haying season of 1906 got the rare job of polishing up the brass oil headlights on that symbol of wealth on dull days when the haying business wet into a temporary eclipse. There was a whole pint can of brass-metal polish under the front seat wrapped up in a flannel cleaning rag. The label on the tin can instructed to “Shake well before using.” It got shaken and used, on every dull day in summer.

That car, Webb Dyer told all inquirers, would travel 45 miles an hour! Why, that was as fast as the cannon-ball freight came rumbling through Cumberland Junction on its way from Bangor to Portland! It was almost unthinkable. And right on the highway, too! Motorcycles had been invented, and appeared along the dirt roads about as soon as autocars. Reuben Merrill, down in Falmouth, had the first one—a Marsh-Metz with a 2-inch flat belt—and he became the hero of every boy in the two neighboring towns.

The Gambo Powder Mill explosion, along in the late 90's, was about the biggest thing in noises to recall from those earlier times. It happened along of a fair afternoon when a small boy played around the yard of the Merrill-Edwards double house near the Cumberland Junction station. We would place the date at about 1898. It seemed to shake the whole village, and caused a great wonder to the youngster playing with a toy boat, whittled from a shingle, around a roadside puddle left by a shower of a day or two before. The next morning’s Portland Daily Press carried the story. Three men were killed in the explosion, and widespread damage was suffered around Cumberland Mills residences, all within a couple of minutes. That was an explosion to end all explosions, the neighbors hoped. And it wrote finis to the Gambo Powder Mills—where all the men who had worked there had had to discard all leather shoes before entering the place for their day’s work. It wouldn’t do for a heel nail to strike a nail in the flooring and give off a spark. But a spark was generated somewhere, and the big mill was gone. This we remember as if it were but last week sometime—and the Gambo Mills were 14 miles away from Cumberland Junction Village. They were built a little north and somewhat east of Cumberland Mills, as we recall, from the newspaper map published in the report the next morning.

And around these turn-of-the-century years there would appear, coming up across the
Maine Central Railroad tracks from the south a fair-haired individual pushing a two-wheeled cart. On the cart tray he had sundries and notions which he sold to any he could interest. This was Scott Pride, a once-a-year visitor who was not averse, when business proved dull, to working for a day or a week for some farmer helping him to get his hay crop, or a vegetable crop, in. Pride was somewhere in his forties and fifties, we’d say, when he made the rounds of the countryside once each year, finally disappearing with his 2-wheeled cart somewhere around 1915.

But of all the curious characters who drifted through the country during these same years, up to about 1910, the weirdest to us were the “female tramps.” “Ma’am Quinn” was the perennial among them. Every year, in late August or well into September, up across the tracks from a southerly direction she would come, a large woman carrying a bag of some sort like even a canvas extension case or an overgrown carpet bag. Her voluminous skirts billowed about her in the wind as she walked with a measured, ponderous tread as if with a purpose in her journeying. Her quite full face was sixtyish and weather-beaten, with a sort of hard-bitten look about it. She had a number of regular stops in our vicinity, at the Porter place half a mile up the road above the railroad, or the Wallace Merrill house up the hill from the No. 7 schoolhouse, or the Merrill-Edwards place at the Junction. She always hove in sight just a little previous to our village’s suppertime. Whatever place she chose to favor with her non-paying presence she would approach with a determined step as if she expected accommodations with no argument.

She would sup with us—or them—then would remark that we were not to put ourselves out much on her account: that she could just as well sleep right on the sitting room floor as anywhere. Following her suggestion the householder would fetch from a back room cupboard an old feather bed that was a little spare in its filling, and a spare pillow used for just such odd situations, and throw them down into a corner for her. Then she would set out to work ponderously, with an occasional grunt, to pull the stuff out of her hand bag and strew it around the floor. The family would discreetly withdraw whilst she occupied herself by sorting out the world’s treasures, like a piece of whalebone, two child’s blocks with big letters on their faces, some scattering hairpins, a safety pin or two, a few odd garments of one sort or another and other things as devoid of interest as anything imaginable.

Neither Mrs. Edwards, upstairs, nor Miss Merrill seemed to be perturbed at having a stranger in the house overnight. Neither did any of the neighbors who had put her up on other occasions. She just slept there on the floor, and appeared ready for breakfast whenever the household had prepared it. She ate quite readily whatever the family had, and then took her bag in hand and left with hardly a good bye.

On one occasion she appeared out of sorts in the morning. Maybe she was kept awake by the bustling and whistling of trains. We couldn’t quite guess. When Olive, seeking to cheer her a little, asked her if she enjoyed the tea she had brewed for the visitor, Ma’am Quinn grumped a little as if swallowing hard, and then replied, “Guess the tea was all right ter start with, but it wa’n’t half cooked!” With that she got her dunnages together and departed into the mist of a morning fog.

Another oldish woman appeared on another occasion afoot and alone like Ma’am Quinn.
She was short of stature and dressed mostly in black where Ma’am Quinn seemed to prefer browns. She inquired at the door if she could find shelter in the house for a lone widdy who had not a chick nor a child in the world. She was ushered into the same corner sitting room, given the same old feather bed and pillow. It was after dark, and after supper.

In the morning she ate at the table and inspected quite carefully every mouthful that she ate. She, too, preferred tea to coffee. When she departed she said, “You have been kind to an old woman; may peace be with you, and God bless you one and all.” Well, that was a pretty good speech, much better than anything Ma’am Quinn ever said, but she never intimated a thing about herself—where she came from or where she was going—just a derelict among the homeless, it appeared. We never saw her again.

Reminiscent of the old-time evening school-house neighborhood meetings at which the adults entertained themselves with spelling-schools, dramatic presentations and “sings” which were discontinued after the Civil War period they continued with get-togethers at their respective homes from then up into the early 1900’s. Charade parties were popular still, as were the plain “sings”. Those “sings” were enjoyed by the youngsters, too. Kids down to the age of four came along.

On a rather cold evening in January that started at dark but with a full, bright moon riding high above the snow-covered landscape, members of a dozen families foregathered at Edmund Merrill’s, over in the fields west of the Junction. By 7-30 PM, the time of gathering, clouds had come up over the western sky. The moon became obscured, and snow began to fall. By 7-15, the wind rose, and as the later arrivals entered “Edmund’s Road,” carrying lanterns and chattering cheerfully a regular blizzard came on with the heavy fall of large-flaked snow. The wind blew one or two of the kerosene lanterns out; but never mind, the company of a dozen or so tramped on into the face of it. Somebody’s lantern would carry them through. If it didn’t, they would make it anyway.

In Edmund’s small field east of the eminence of his house, sleighs and pungs were drawn up, with most of the horses unharnessed and led into the open area of the barn between the tall hay-mows. The nine windows looking out over the fields and small orchard were lighted up like a church, and within the house were the sounds of merriment that only a company of congenial neighbors would ever stir up.

The Fred Sweetzers were there, and so were the E.B. Osgoods. Ed always depended upon himself to “balance” a choir. And there was Howard Buxton, the profoundest bass in town. There were Will and Minnie Brown, too. Will, a section hand on the railroad, was not so musical, but he enjoyed hearing his wife put on her Irish skits and sing her songs. The Herbert Evans’ had appeared, and also the Nat Cole’s who had walked the blizzard with a lantern even...
though they had three horses and a sleigh in the barn, but they had only a half mile to come, not worth harnessing up for. And there was a sleigh load down from the North End including the Sewell Whitneys. Adding to the number were a sprinkling of common-school pupils from No. 7 and Center School # [3].

Village elders, 150th Anniversary of Cumberland Congregational Church, August 29, 1943

The blizzard howled but within, nobody thought much about it. The guests spread out through the “clock room,” the sitting room on the west, the big kitchen with its day couch and two or three great rockers, and the parlor with its wood-burning heater close to the fire-place wall.

Around the large, marble-topped table of the parlor and radiating outward from it the singers gathered. Most of the urchins stayed in the kitchen to engage in games of Lagomache and Authors and such on the big chair-table. Others perched on the wood-box near the parlor heater or on the haircloth sofa against the eastern side just to hear the “old folk” sing. And sing they did.

They started in, when Edmund’s sister Abbie had taken her place at the melodeon, with Liberty Tree and made the house ring. Then they went into the old penny-rounds and hymns that they sang in the church on Sundays, but with never so much gusto as now: “Bringing in the Sheaves,” “Duke Street,” then “Jonathan’s Courtship” for a change, then back to “The Old Rugged Cross.” You should have heard Sewell Whitney, Ed Osgood and Herbert Evans on that one! The whole house vibrated to those deep, blended voices, supplemented in the chorus by Edmund, himself, seated by the wall near the kitchen doorway with his eyes half shut, his long brown beard covering up his vest, seeming less diffident than when in his church pew on Sundays as the hymns were sung. He had a noble voice, but on Sunday he didn’t make a show of himself by drowning out the whole congregation as he well could have done. He was more subdued on Sundays. But here he was among his friends with whom he had sung for forty years. These men and women were all former members of the old singing-schools of Pre-Civil-War times. They could read music, and render full value to every note.

Presently they prevailed upon Edmund to sing his old favorite that many of them had heard him sing when alone in the fields or as he worked about his silo or at mending fence along his pasture lane. He insisted on a “helper” to accompany him to make it a duet. He chose his cousin, Fred Sweetser; then, with Abbie at the melodeon, they joined in perfect harmony in that ancient song that had come down the generations from near Pilgrim times:

“Oh, stay on the farm, boys contented;
No matter how humble your lot:
A mansion so grand in the city
Is not half so good as a cot.

Stay at home, on the farm,
Away from all intrigue and harm,
For if you’d live long and be happy
Stay home, boys, stay home on the farm!”

The walls of the old farmhouse echoed; the howl of the blizzard’s winds was stayed. Even the children deserted their games at the kitchen table to come and stand in the parlor doorway to listen. Some of them would never hear the like again.

In the hush that followed they begged Minnie Brown to sing them something in her
inimitable Irish brogue. The melodeon struck up “The Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill,” and Minnie sang it as nobody else could, ever. In an encore to the loud applause she came back with “MacSauley’s Most Wonderful Twins.” And that brought down the house, as the press notices would have had it.

Shortly, with some show of reluctance, Howard Buxton sat up nearer the melodeon to sing alone, “Asleep in the deep,” as nobody but he could render it. Even the kids stood around while he sang before going back to their Lagoon, their Authors and their Jackstraws.

Edmund’s sister Martha bustled around from buttery to kitchen to add a stick or two to the fires from out of the wood-box at the right end of the fire-place as the youngsters sat down again at the big chair-table, a little subdued, somehow. Nobody who had ever sat through a “sing” like that would ever be quite the same again.

Shortly before the grandfather’s clock in the western sitting room banged out the hour of ten on a gong loud enough for a ship’s bell on a brigantine Sisters Abbie and Martha came out of the buttery with tray piled with a farm-country confection, set up hard during the daylight hours in that cold room with the best Puerto Rico molasses, and passed them around the relaxing guests. After a little they began to stir. They looked out-of-doors to discover, and remark upon, a bright moon. The blizzard was over. It had been just a big squall that had left but six inches of new, light snow. Horses were backed out of the barn and harnessed between shafts, the women in warm coats and mufflers settled into the sleighs; the villagers set out with the lanterns relighted to wade down the field slope to the Junction road. And everybody waved to everybody else in a spirit that guaranteed they would all reassemble at the next meeting-place at the appointed time. What though there was a little fall of new snow? ‘Twas nothing to the wearers of leggings and tall overshoes who bore lanterns and light hearts of honest friendship.

Thus on a few years into the 1900’s. This period from 1895 to 1915 could well be designated the best in the joy of living in the kinder time among the rural people of our land; the same in Sanford and Richmond, in Dexter and Greenville, as in Mattawamkeag and Cumberland.

Heedless of the potential of the new automobile the railroads assumed an arrogance toward the public whose money had built them, and their decline was therefrom assured. Osten
tation had a brief upsurge, but the American
Ice Company’s big warehouses began to deteriorate. Macadam resurfaced the old graveled roads for heavier and still heavier trucks to rumble over them. Bridges became bigger ones with reinforced webs of steel. Lindbergh flew the Spirit of St. Louis to Paris, then later flew over Cumberland Center on a misty day becoming lost; he banked into the southeast to read our station sign and thus orient himself for a landing at Portland’s airport, then out in Scarborough. Medley Watson, a Maine Central Signal Main-tainer, identified the plane from a news picture of that morning’s press.

As the steam railroads began to suffer from a loss of business the electric railways began to profit—for a time. Time was, back in the ’80’s and early ’90’s, when Portland’s streets were paved with cobble-stones and it had a horse-car street railroad. Wagons with iron tires rumbled in tune with horses’ hooves. A small boy of three or four could sit on the horse-car seat with his legs sticking out straight into the aisle. He could look up forward through the driver’s window and see the bobbing heads and ears of the team of horses which hauled the car along a pair of iron rails. But this system was soon to be superseded by an electric car system already coming into use in the bigger cities. The horse-cars had crawled up Bramhall Hill from Union Station at two miles per hour; but the new electrics climbed that hill at eight and ten miles per hour, and went down the slope faster than the horses even at a trot. Ghastly acetylene street lamps gave way soon to Edison electric lights, and the city was said to be becoming “modern.”

But still, in Cumberland’s West End, the Mountfort Bros. sawmill and the Wilson mill, both with mill-dams from the same brook, continued to saw up the pines and spruces from ‘roundabout as they had done for decades. Farmers, who wanted sawdust bedding for their cattle, could come in to the huge sawdust piles and fill up short-bags that held two bushels with clean pine and spruce and hemlock sawdust for two cents per bag, or haul home on a horse-sled in winter a cord or two of soft wood edgings or slabs, that would dry rapidly, for kindling and ready fuel for their kitchen ranges—a boon to the wood-burning stoves. Before the Thomas mill on Blanchard Road near the close of our century’s first decade had burned the immediate Center found there a similar source of ready fuel in addition to all the other materials for home building and repair. Life at the Center was thus convenient and well-organized for community living.

But there was only so much timber. No one seemed to think that the supply would ever be exhausted. By the second decade all the first growth had been cut, milled and depleted. Though Maine was a forested county its supply of conifers began to dwindle by 2900 until the overshot wheels of the Mountfort and Wilson mills stopped turning. Within the past few years these relics of once-busy mills have been bought by outsiders and rebuilt into much less attractive structures called “residences,” that have no air of livingness or neighborliness about them, a sad contrast to their old, busy days of welcomed utility.

The electric trolley era lasted about forty years. By about 1896 Portland’s horse cars were superseded by the new trolley system which was installed in the city. Passengers from the Boston & Maine and Maine Central Railroads would take the electric cars back of Union Station in Portland and, for a dime, make the transit of the city in a few minutes or drop off at any block in the shopping area. Residents of the city found
them a new convenience in getting around better than they had had before; and there was no pollution of the air from the carriers. By 1900 we had the general notion that from then on, it would always be so. Until automobiles became so numerous as to make inroads into the street car business.

There are many commuters today who would like to see the old train and trolley days come back. The steam railroads, through Union Station, and the electric railway system worked as a great team. Kennebunkport has done well to collect the great number of old-time trolley cars in the world into a museum where people can still take a trolley ride such as they used to in 1900.

**Recreation Parks At Turn Of The Century**

The Portland Electric Railway established and promoted a number of recreation parks in our general area around the beginning of our century. They were all of rustic character that blended well into the surroundings. The trolley lines had been extended out through Deering, Falmouth, and in 1902 through Yarmouth, Freeport, Brunswick, even to Bath.

Riverton Park, in the Deering area, had a fine casino, a midway, a zoo where one could feed tame deer, raccoons, marmots and others. It had a rustic theatre with seats arranged in a semi-circle where there was a free show in afternoons and evenings. There was a naphtha launch on which for a 25 cent fee one or a group could take a sail up and down the Presumpscot River which ran down back of the stage of the theatre.

Young and old loaded the trolley cars to capacity from out of Portland during the summer months, with a car every few minutes during the rush hours.

The casino had a broad verandah where visitors could rest and watch other visitors, or drop a nickel into the slot of a Regina Music Box to enjoy the tunes of one’s choice from a big, circular, perforated aluminum record. All the popular tunes of the day were there: After the Ball, Just As the Sun Went Down, Where the Yukon River Flows, the Letter Edged in Black, the Spanish War songs, etc.

Or one could stroll the midway to seek balloons or other trinkets or “Buy our new drink, Mead!” a milky concoction hardly as potent as the original, for which it was named, made by the Egyptians from wheat about 3,000 years ago.

Then there was Underwood Spring Park out in Falmouth Foreside with another rustic theatre with open air seats like Riverton’s. It was quite near the Falmouth Town Landing. It gave a good daylight view of the Bay and the islands off-shore. In the evening it had a special feature in an “electric fountain” which by means of a lot of colored light bulbs concealed around the base gave beautiful rainbow effects across the tall jets of clear water spurting out of the center. This Park also “packed ‘em in,” with every afternoon and evening trolley jam-full of visitors in pleasant weather from Portland, Yarmouth, Freeport and Brunswick. And the new Casco Castle, out in South Freeport, in 1902, drew its quota, even rain or shine. It looked as if the trolley line were making money.

“Hey, Grover!” one youngster hailed another in Cumberland’s Lower Village, a day in July, 1904, “What’s the Velma C. doin’ comin’ over the Cross Road?”

“Why y’orter know,” responded the one hailed, “She’s takin’ a crowd over to Casco Castle—just ‘s it said in the paper this mornin’.
Albert Maddox is driving the barge over there—most all day. They’re goin’ ter eat dinner—lobsters ‘n’ everythin’. Why don’t you go over sometime?”

“Gosh! Wish I could; but it costs an awful lot—fifty cents ter eat, ‘nd the barge fare is twenty cents more. But I’ll bet that’s a slam-gorgeous place.”

“It is, just that. My father took me ‘n’ Bill over, coupla weeks back. It’s all shiny inside, ‘n; a big, big dinin’ room with great, big winders yer look out of while yer eatin’ broiled lobsters ‘n’ clams. ‘N’ yer can climb up a twisty staircase inside the stone tower in that Europeen castle ‘n’ look way off ter th’islands ‘n’ out ter sea. Yer just gotta go over there sometime.”

But the other boy never got the chance. He had only 46 cents in his small wallet that had cost 10 cents already at that new Woolworth store in Portland. A whole dollar was hard to come by, at age 11 or 12. Grover’s father had MONEY. He ran the big steam bulgine in Thaxter’s grain mill in the city. His name was Hans Hanson, and he smoked a great, big porcelain pipe. He was a Dane, and of course a Democrat. That’s why his youngest son was named for the then incumbent of the White House: so, Grover Cleveland Hanson.

We Remember

The essential story of Casco Castle, on Harraseeket Bay, is soon told in this brief paragraph from the 1970 issue of Freeport Yesterdays:

“The coming of a trolley line in 1902 made great changes in the life of the town by furnishing what seemed at the time the ultimate in rapid transportation. Casco Castle was built to promote trolley travel. It consisted of a wooden summer hotel and a stone lookout tower. There was also a park with a somewhat moth eaten zoo, some rather fine flower gardens and, best of all from the standpoint of sports fans, a baseball field. The hotel was never a success though a shore dinner cost fifty cents and full accommodations were three dollars a day! The wooden hotel burned in 1914, but the stone tower, built by a Freeport man, still stands and serves as a valuable landmark for the many pleasure boats which now range the bay.”

Coincident with the advent of the automobile was the decline of the electric and steam passenger carriers. By about 1940 the recreation parks had vanished, cut up into housing lots. Had Casco Castle not burned it would probably have been razed by some agency. Only the Bay and ocean about the site remain the same, the sole feature of our world that has suffered the least from the ravages of change.

We hate to see the old things go. We miss the cheerful ways, the essential kindliness of the old neighbors whom we loved through all the vicissitudes, the give and take of time. These are not the fancies of a moment, of the rush and turmoil of don’t-care generations in ferment.

For those, for instance, who wish to know how to raise successfully a family let them not inquire of the supercilious, the society-mind-.
ed of Beacon Hill who have set position above the kindly word, the warm regard of friendship; let them rather go to Mrs. Cally Watson of Yarmouth who has raised seven children to adulthood every one of whom is still alive, or to the Eddie Bolducs of the old Junction Village in Cumberland who, like the Watsons, on railroad pay brought up five who are all out serving the indifferent world well in their own various capacities with not a ne’er-do-well in the lot. These kindly people know more of basic truth than the whole parcel of sycophants and hippies within the confines of Tri-Mountain. Or in Gotham or that run-down “City of Brotherly Love.” We think that it would give William Penn a bad turn today.

We miss the clean fields after haying season in mid-summer when every field had been mowed, the hay dried in the sun, the hauled into the barns in hay-racks and built into mows to right and left of the main floor. Now, since there are few cattle raised to eat the hay, and since almost no horses are left to do the heavy hauling on the farms the tall grass is left standing to wilt and die yearly until the hock-weed takes over—the last “crop” before the land has become sterile. Some of those old boys of the last of the 1800’s mowed the whole fields with hand scythes. Mr. Alvin Frank, who lived on the corner opposite the church, worked for the farmers mowing thus by hand. That was one of the toughest jobs that men ever did—a steady drain on their power of muscle, including the heart. But somehow men lived through it, before the days when every farmer had a two-horse mower.

And we miss the bench wagon of Old Silas Rideout, with his tuft of chin whiskers, as, whip in hand waving to all and sundry, he rattled by and spoke to everyone he met or saw in his dooryard or field. We just miss the spirit of good cheer and camaraderie of the good Old Times. They have languished, shriveled up, in the changes of the world that seems to have lost its vision. On some summer day we are impelled at times to sit on a grassy knoll and muse over a scene from a happier time—the time of Bayard Taylor, a Quaker poet of the 1870’s:

“As home we drove we saw no fields look half as green as ours;

   The woods were coming into leaf, the meadows full of flowers.

   The neighbors met us in the lane, and every face was kind—

   ‘Tis strange how clearly everything comes back upon my mind...”

Only the ocean remains unchanged. It still sweeps the shores of the County and Town of Cumberland.