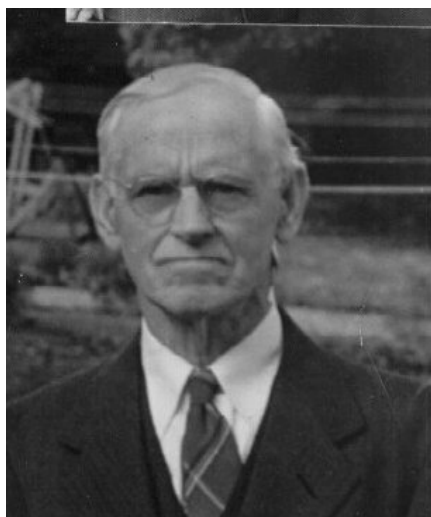


# THE LIFE OF A PLODDER FRED GORTON'S 95 YEARS

Part One

an account compiled from his memoirs and diaries  
by his granddaughter  
Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson



*Fred Gorton in 1948*

## INTRODUCTION AND DISCLAIMER

You are reading Part One of the memoirs of Fred Gorton, consisting of the first two chapters of THE LIFE OF A PLODDER. Please see separate files for the remaining chapters and APPENDIX I, II, and III.

This pdf file is fully searchable by using the "find" feature and typing in the name or place you are interested in. The font size can also be enlarged for easier reading. The text is being made available in this format so that it may be easily printed or downloaded, but I would appreciate acknowledgment of the source if you choose to reproduce any of the material elsewhere.

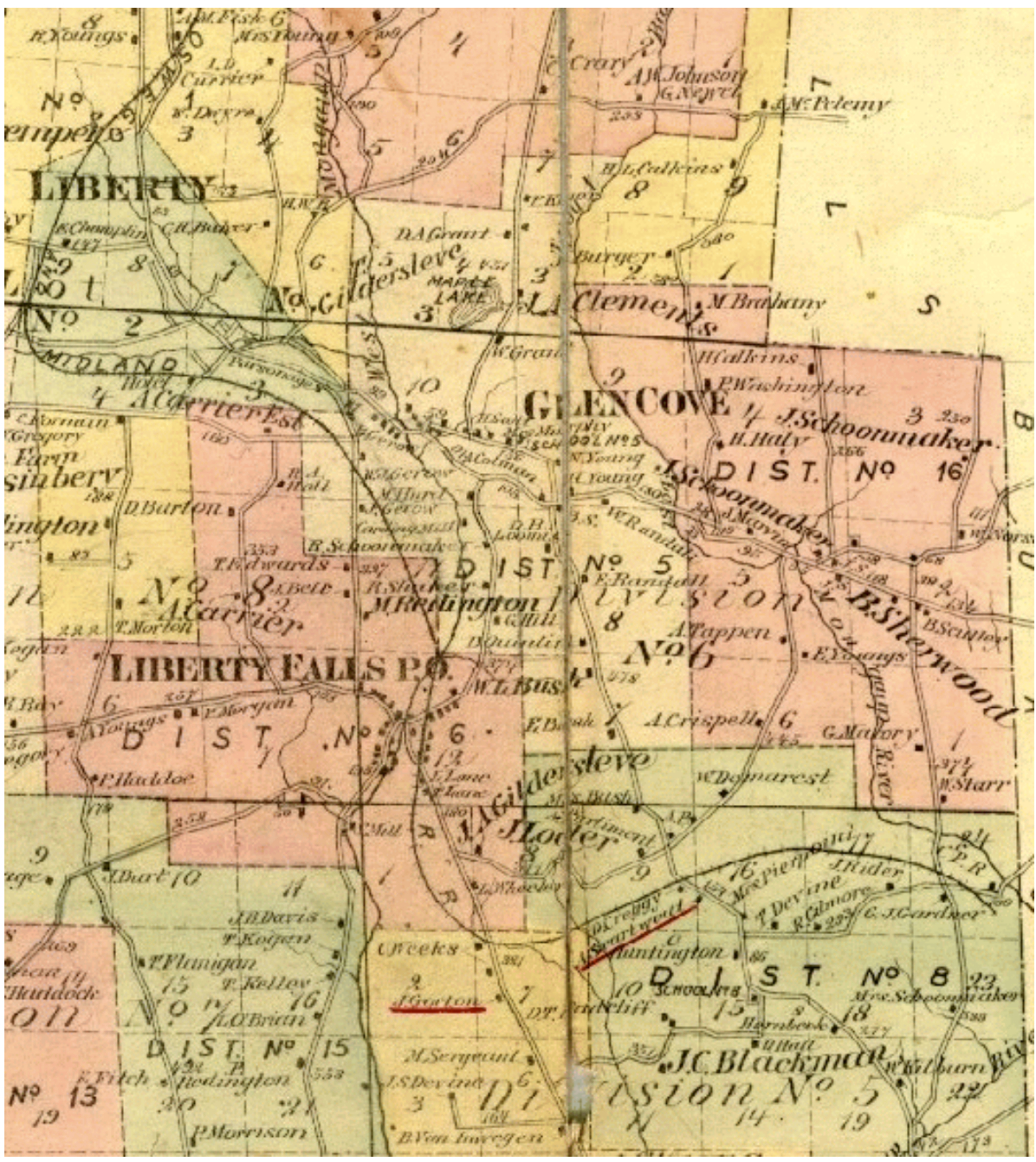
The complete LIFE OF A PLODDER contains the following: CHAPTER ONE: THE CHILD, CHAPTER TWO: THE YOUTH, CHAPTER THREE: THE MARRIED MAN, CHAPTER FOUR: THE R.F.D. CARRIER, CHAPTER FIVE: THE COMPANY MAN, CHAPTER SIX: THE SENIOR CITIZEN, APPENDIX I: EXCERPTS FROM DAVID HALL'S DIARY, APPENDIX II: ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY FRED GORTON ON MAY 2, 1963, and APPENDIX III: MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ABOUT PEOPLE FRED GORTON KNEW.

I have tried to select those events in his life and those entries in his diaries which best show the man and his times. I hope he would have been pleased. The original version of this book was made for Fred's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. There were five copies printed in 1980 and then thirty-five more including additional photographs. This new version is revised and expanded, with an attempt made to identify the people Fred Gorton wrote about. Unless I was certain of the correction, I have left the spelling of names as he wrote them. I've also left his spelling for "trashing buckwheat" and the like. Typographical errors are mine. Those involving dates may well have been missed in proofreading, since they wouldn't be caught without checking each one against the original. Please feel free to send corrections to me at [emerson@megalink.net](mailto:emerson@megalink.net).

The opinions expressed in these pages are Fred Gorton's. He was not politically correct by modern standards. Neither was he concerned about libel or slander. He may have been wrong in some of his statements, but he believed he was recording nothing but the truth. I make no apology for him, nor for sharing these records of historical interest with a wider audience. If any of the descendants of those mentioned herein wish to dispute one of my grandfather's comments, I will be happy to add their side of the story to this document and put the revised version on line.

Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson  
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Wilton, Maine  
February, 2005

P.S. To those who have read my novels, in particular *Julia's Mending* and the forthcoming *No Mortal Reason*, some of this material will sound very familiar. For more information on my professional writing, as opposed to this project, which was a personal labor of love, please see my website at [www.kathyllynemerson.com](http://www.kathyllynemerson.com)



This section of a map from the Sullivan County Atlas of 1875 shows the area of Liberty in Sullivan County, New York where Fred Gorton lived. "J. Gorton" underlined in red indicates Old Hickory Farm, at the time of this map in the possession of John Gorton, N.G. Gorton's father. The property is on Rt. 175. The point where Rt. 175 crosses the railroad tracks is Strongtown Crossing. The Strongtown Schoolhouse ( District #17) is just south of the area shown above.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE CHILD

On September 17, 1878, while people in New York City were experimenting with early models of the telephone and the postal card was first being sent nationwide, twin boys were born to Nathaniel Gildersleeve Gorton and his wife Lucy. Gill Gorton was thirty-six. Lucy was thirty-four. Already there were four children—Janette, Grace, George, and Ai—but Gill was a prosperous farmer and welcomed a large family, especially one of boys. He had been the thirteenth child himself, but had inherited half of his father's farm, which he had previously leased from him, three years earlier. He had traded his house in Liberty Falls to his older brother John for the other half of Old Hickory Farm and owned a dairy herd, horses, and oxen.

The newest Gorton children were named Fred and Floyd, although Daniel and David had been briefly considered. Twins were not unexpected. John Gorton had been a twin too.

For clarity, I insert here a brief genealogical excerpt, starting with the first Gorton to settle in Sullivan County, John Gorton, who came to Liberty, according to the history of that town given in the Hamilton Child's *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Sullivan County, N.Y. for 1872-3*, "in 1795, having previously, in 1793, located with his cousins, Thomas and William Grant, in Fallsburgh." James Quinlan's *History of Sullivan County* (1873) adds "In 1797, John Gorton moved to the Blue Mountain settlement and located a short distance west of the present village of Liberty, on land since owned by his grandson, Elias Champlin." This is the present site of the Liberty Central Jr.-Sr. High School, which opened in 1963. At the first town meeting in Liberty, John Gorton and John Woodward were elected fence viewers, to be paid at the rate of 37½ ¢ a day.

**John Gorton**, born April 01, 1766 in New London, CT; died November 25, 1851 in Liberty, NY. He was the son of **Samuel Gorton** and **Mercy Grant**. He married **Sarah Gates** November 22, 1787 in Preston, CT.  
Occupation: 1785, Sea captain between New London and Stonington  
Residence 1: 1789, New London, CT  
Residence 2: 1793, Fallsburgh, NY  
Residence 3: 1795, Liberty, NY

Children of John Gorton and Sarah Gates are:

- i. Phebe Gorton, born June 13, 1789 in New London, CT; died July 21, 1844 in Liberty, NY; married Dudley Champlin.
- ii. Elizabeth Gorton, born November 19, 1791 in New London, CT; died February 02, 1834; married William Van Benschotter 1811; born 1784; died 1833.
- iii. Sarah (Sally) Gorton, born March 19, 1794 in Neversink, NY; married James Hubbell.
- iv. John G. Gorton, born June 04, 1797 in Liberty, NY; died October 19, 1875 in Liberty Falls (now Ferndale), NY; married Sally Ann Gildersleeve December 30, 1819.
- v. Mercy Gorton, born January 08, 1800.
- vi. Grant Gorton, born August 16, 1803 in Liberty, NY; died March 01, 1892; married Emeline Buckley 1826 in Callicoon Depot; born Abt. 1807; died 1864.
- vii. Elmira Gorton, born October 13, 1806; died September 20, 1827.

**John G. Gorton**, born June 04, 1797 in Liberty, NY; died October 19, 1875 in Liberty Falls (now Ferndale), NY. He was the son of **John Gorton** and **Sarah Gates**. He married **Sally Ann Gildersleeve** December 30, 1819.

**Sally Ann Gildersleeve**, born February 05, 1799 in Liberty, NY; died June 15, 1887 in Liberty, NY. She was the daughter of **Nathaniel Gildersleeve** and **Jerusha Powell**.

Occupation: Farmer, Liberty Falls, NY (161 acres); value of real estate in 1850 was \$3700 and in 1870, \$5000.

Children of John Gorton and Sally Gildersleeve are:

- i. Alfred Gorton, born January 06, 1821; died June 04, 1872; married Margaret Tremper 1846; born December 17, 1828; died September 29, 1906. Occupation: farmer
- ii. Sarah Gorton, born March 04, 1822; died October 11, 1879; married Daniel Hardenburgh 1842; born 1818; died 1891.
- iii. Collins Gorton, born November 1823; died June 02, 1865; married Rebecca Palmatier 1847; born June 14, 1827; died June 28, 1885.
- iv. Isaac Gorton, born April 15, 1825; died January 27, 1856.
- v. George Gorton, born March 01, 1827; died April 09, 1855.
- vi. Elmira Gorton, born October 26, 1828; died March 22, 1903.
- vii. Phebe Gorton, born February 01, 1831; died February 1908; married George Kortright January 01, 1857; born 1829; died June 1908.
- viii. Mary Gorton, born February 19, 1833; died March 01, 1863.
- ix. James G. Gorton, born August 16, 1834; died September 18, 1836.
- x. John G. Gorton, born August 16, 1834; died March 12, 1914 in Ferndale, NY; married Hannah Van Inwegen 1858; died January 1907.
- xi. Jerusha Ann Gorton, born July 15, 1836; died October 29, 1910; married David Hall 1872; born 1827; died June 10, 1893.
- xii. James P. Gorton, born April 04, 1838; died October 08, 1857.
- xiii. Nathaniel Gildersleeve Gorton, born December 18, 1841 in Liberty Falls, NY; died December 21, 1922 in Liberty, NY; married Lucy Misner January 26, 1870.

**Nathaniel Gildersleeve Gorton**, born December 18, 1841 in Liberty Falls, NY; died December 21, 1922 in Liberty, NY. He was the son of **John G. Gorton** and **Sally Ann Gildersleeve**. He married **Lucy Misner** January 26, 1870.

Military service: went to Callicoon to train during the Civil War but was not called

Occupation 1: Farmer; inherited ½ of Old Hickory Farm; traded house in Liberty Falls with brother for the rest

Occupation 2: March 1872, postmaster at Liberty Falls

**Lucy Misner**, born March 16, 1844 in Hasbrouck, NY; died February 13, 1933 in Hurleyville, NY. She was the daughter of **Tunis Misner** (July 2, 1800-April 12, 1887) and **Cynthia Brown** (d. Aug. 29, 1891 @ 88).

Children of Nathaniel Gorton and Lucy Misner are:

- i. Anna Jeanette Gorton, born October 19, 1871; died March 04, 1910; married George Taylor December 26, 1908; born 1855; died May 16, 1933. She was known as Janette to the family.
- ii. Grace Gorton, born August 23, 1873; died March 17, 1966; married Charles Clark Farquhar September 10, 1889; born 1867; died July 08, 1933 in Hurleyville, NY.
- iii. George Gorton, born October 03, 1874; died September 30, 1954 in Hartwick Seminary; married Martha Hand October 24, 1900; born September 04, 1877; died October 05, 1960.
- iv. Ai Gildersleeve Gorton, born January 14, 1877; died May 15, 1947; married Emma Johnson October 01, 1898.
- v. Floyd Gorton, born September 17, 1878; died August 20, 1962 in Oneonta, NY; married Alice Matteson November 22, 1919.
- vi. Fred S Gorton, born September 17, 1878 in Strongtown, NY; died November 26, 1973 in Newtown, Fairfield Co., CT; married Daisy Cordelia Steenrod June 25, 1901 in Liberty, NY.
- vii. Norman Leslie Gorton, born May 19, 1881; died November 25, 1957 in Middletown, NY; married Hazel Wood February 08, 1912; born 1896; died February 09, 1946.
- viii. Cecil Hall Gorton, born April 14, 1887; died July 08, 1944; married (1) Orie Elizabeth Clark May 20, 1912; married (2) Florence Heckman November 29, 1922.



- ix. Osmer Norwood Gorton, born September 09, 1890; died June 06, 1959 in Westwood, NJ; married Grace Foley January 24, 1913. Osmer Norwood Gorton was raised as the child of Nathaniel and Lucy Gorton, but he was actually born to Anna Jeanette Gorton, father unknown.



*Old Hickory Farm*

1880 was a census year and the "enumerator" (Victory Champlin) visited Old Hickory Farm, about a mile south of Liberty Falls depot in the area then known as Strongtown, on June 18th. I was surprised, when I looked back two pages, to find the name Cordelia Steenrod. A few pages after Old Hickory comes the entry for David Hall, Fred's uncle. To give a complete picture of the area, I've listed below the entries on Roll 936, Book 1, from the top of page 183a through David Hall's entry on page 185b. There is more information in the census entries, such as country of birth, but I've chosen instead to put only the essentials plus any information on these people to be found in Fred Gorton's memoirs.

#114 was occupied by Basley Gerow, 60, a farmer, his wife Barbara Ann, 60, Gertrude Gerow, 20 and James Gerow, 19, both listed as "adopted" and "servant" and Phillip Miller, 18, laborer. Basley Gerow died June 14, 1905 @ 85. Gertrude Gerow (1859-March 17, 1939) married Frank Delmarter (d. Oct. 25, 1932 @ 72).

#115 was occupied by Jane (or possibly Janet) D. Gerow, 75 and Henry, 27, her son.

[Editor's note: The copy of the census records I'm working from is difficult to read in places both because of the census taker's handwriting and the condition of the pages.]

#116 appears to be occupied by Linda Gorton, 32, servant, which seems odd. Head of household was usually listed first. Perhaps she belongs with #115. Listed next at #116 are William Comfort, 46, farmer, his wife Martha, 42, his daughter Ada, 15, his son Archie, 10, John Haddick, 19, servant and Archibald Ralston, 73, whose relationship is not given. William Comfort died October 29, 1915 @ 80. He married second Mrs. Philemon (Isabella) Young and lived on the Young Place, Loch Sheldrake Road. He had a stroke in 1914. Philemon Young died September 10, 1892 @ 59. Young's daughter Edith married Orville Ray Todd (October 13, 1877-October 3, 1940), and they made their home on the Philemon Young place. Archie Comfort died October 31, 1952 @ 82. He married Minnie Corwin and was a farmer in Bethel.

#117 was occupied by James G. Greening, 46, farmer and others in the family were wife Maria, 45 (d. May 19, 1916) and children William J., 18, Llewellan, 17, James G., 14, and Grace Ella, 5.

#118 was occupied by John Clements, 44, farmer, his wife Lizzie (?), 34, and children John R., 11, Thomas M., 9 and William A., 5.

#119 was occupied by W. D. (William Doll) Steenrod, 52, farmer [May 4, 1828-Jan. 20, 1882] and his wife Cordelia, 47 [d. Mar. 16, 1906 @ 73], together with his sons Amos G., 21 [d. Feb. 8, 1924 of pneumonia, White Sulphur Springs; m. Lucy Stoddard (d. Feb. 16, 1924)] and Julius G., 17 and their children Edwin D., 6 [d. Nov. 5, 1956 @ 82 Sharon WI; m. 1) Carrie Harmon 2) Mary Clottenburg (d. 1946) 3) Mary Jones] and Cordelia, 4, and Jennie A., eight months. Daisy Cordelia Steenrod would later marry Fred Gorton. Also living with W. D. Steenrod was his mother-in-law, Abigail [Dodge] Darbee, 83.

#120 was occupied by S. C. Jenkins, 76, shoemaker. S. Clark Jenkins died October 2, 1888 @ 84 when struck by the milk train at Gerow's Crossing. He lived on the corner next to Ferndale school. Living with Jenkins was Fanny, 33, listed as his daughter, but Fred's memoirs state she was his granddaughter, daughter of Clark Jenkins's daughter Emma Jean. Fanny later moved to California. By 1963 when most of Fred's memoirs were written, there was no trace left of the Jenkins house or barn.

#121 was occupied by Charles Ryder, 32, laborer, his wife Mary, 29, and son Warren (?). Also Henry Glood (?), 61, his wife Henrietta, 55, and their niece Ella, 16, Kitche (?), 10, and Orloff Doughty, 17, servant. The Charles Ryder place was at the southern end of the railroad trestle.

#122 was occupied by Benjamin O. Williams, 32, his wife Emma, 27 and their son Freddie B., 4.

#123 was occupied by Prudence Horton, 92 and her daughter Annie or Annis, 65.

#124 was occupied by John G. Gorton, 46, carpenter (Aug. 16, 1834-Mar. 12, 1914). His wife's name is listed as Emma J., 44, but this is a mistake. John married Hannah Van Inwegen (d. 1907 @ 71) Their children are listed as I. J., 20 [d. 1935; Irving James married Harriet Lenz and had Paul, Elmer, Vera, Clara & Gertrude], William J., 18 [d. 1941; m. Emma Schuler (d. April 5, 1954 @ 80)], Carrie O., 17 [Carrie or Caroline Ophelia; d. 1902; never married], Dora A., 14 [d. April 10, 1939 @ 61; m. Orrin Mould], Reuben M., 12 [d. March 15, 1949, Dudley, MA; m. Myra Terwilleger and had Edna and Helen], Henrietta A., 10 [Henrietta Augusta aka Retta; d. 1922; m. Alfred Broadway and had Inez and Mildred], Edith E., 8 [Edith Estella; d.

March 15, 1954 @78; m. Melvin Blade (d. March 1, 1949 @ 78; ch: Leona, Evelyn, Melvin, Cyrus W.), and John V., 5 [John Van; d. Jan. 31, 1952; m. Mary Scott Purdy and had Anna, Lawrence, Kenneth, June, John, Walter and Edward]. John G. Gorton was N.G. Gorton's brother.

#125 was occupied by Peter G. Brochu, 57, blacksmith, his wife Mary, 45, and children Charles S., 19, Annie L., 11, Ambrose, 5, William J., 2, and Thomas, 1. Nellie Brochu (Mrs. Ambrose) died September 20, 1942 at 62. ("He used stocks to raise the oxen to be shod off their feet using two belts 4" wide and a hand crank to lift the ox up off its feet.")

#126 was occupied by Robert Gird, 54, who worked in tanning, his wife Elizabeth, 56, and his children Thomas, 22, George, 18, and Rose, 16. Fred lists the death of George Gird as January 13, 1937 and Sadie Gird on July 23, 1937 at 50.

#127 was occupied by John Raymond, 41, laborer, his wife Catherine, 32, and children (daughter), 10, Hattie, 7, Abram, 6, Elida, 4, John, 2 and Ernest, 3 months. See Appendix III under Hans Raymond.

#128 was occupied by Mark Meddaugh, 30, laborer, his wife Susan, 16, and Maggie Carpenter, 6. "Duke" died July 9, 1936 @ 83. He'd lost his right leg at 18 when he slipped between the cars of a moving train. See Appendix III for more.

#129 was occupied by Erskine (?) Thompson, 24, laborer, his wife Helen, 24 and a daughter age 2.

#130 was occupied by Jonah B. Davis, 73, shoemaker, his wife Olive, 60, their son Eugene, 28, their granddaughter Carrie, 5. Also listed are Peter Graves? Craven? 29, laborer, his wife Anna, 26 and children Susan, 9, Edith, 4, and Saddle, 2.

#131 was occupied by Edward or Edmund W. Fox, 46, his wife Marietta, 45 and his daughter Edith W., 12.

#132 was occupied by A\_\_\_ Polhamus, 35, laborer, his wife Mary Ann, 30, and their children (son), 11, (Daughter), 8, and Henry, 2.

#133 was occupied by John McDonald, 55, laborer, his wife Margaret, 50, and their children Mary, 14 and Catherine, 18.

#134 was occupied by George Devine, 55, laborer, Catherine, 45, and Sopherina (?), 12.

#135 was occupied by John Manion, 50, who owned the store, and his children Marietta, 20, Lizzie, 17, Katie, 10, William 28, who worked in the store, Joseph, 21, station agent, and Henry, 14. Also in the household were William Gird, boarder and Michael Manion, 65, John's brother.

#136 was occupied by Thomas W. Lane, 54, farmer [d. @ 96; lived at Ferndale hilltop], his wife Mary E., 51 [Mary Smith; d. @ 85] and their children Annie M. 23, Sarah, 20, Charles, 17, Lizzie (?), 15, and Fanny (?), 10.

#137 was occupied by Alexander Gildersleeve, 47, farmer, his wife Mary J., 45, and children H\_\_\_ (son), 14, and George, 11. This was John Alexander (d. 1903), son of James Gildersleeve and nephew of Sally Ann Gildersleeve Gorton.

#138 was occupied by Lewis S. Wheeler, 47, farmer [d. Sept. 5, 1914 @ 81] and his wife Freelove B., 38 [Fred gives her given names as Anna Freelove; she d. May 6, 1914 @ 71], together with their children William W., 12 [d. Jan. 18, 1956 @ 87 in Oakland CA], Halla D., 10, Horace, 7 [Horace S. aka Racie d. July 29, 1942 @ 69; b. March 26, 1873], Emma C., 4 [Cassie?], and Fred G. (son), 2 [d. Nov. 2, 1958 @ 81 in Jersey City, N.J.]. Their daughter



Angeline [d. March 4, 1968 @ 85] married Benjamin Ryal Gerow (December 13, 1880-December 16, 1961). He was the son of Joshua and Anna Kirk Gerow, sheriff, assemblyman, and postmaster and he and Angeline had sixteen children.

#139 was Old Hickory Farm, occupied by N. Gildersleeve Gorton, 38, farmer, Lucy, 36, his wife, and their children Janett, 8, Grace, 7, George, 5, Ai, 3, Freddie, 2, and Floyd, 2. Also in the household were George Cramer (?), 19 and Rosa Riyman, 17, servants.

#140 was occupied by Sally Ann Gildersleeve Gorton, 81, Fred's grandmother (Feb. 5, 1799-June 15, 1887), her daughter Elmira, 51, [Oct. 26, 1828-Mar. 22, 1903], and Sally Ann's grandson James, 15. This was James H Gorton [Dec. 7, 1864-April 11, 1950], youngest son of Collins Gorton and Rebecca Palmatier. Collins Gorton d. June 2, 1865 in the Civil War, James H. Gorton married 1) Hattie Sarvis (div) and 2) Margaret Blivin (d. 1931). See Appendix III for more on Sally Ann, James, and Collins Gorton.

#141 was occupied by Ann E. Wickes, 60 and Hannah Wheat, 18, boarder. [References in Fred's memoirs always refer to his neighbor as Druscilla Wickes.] Also listed at #141 are Emilia or Cornelia Devine, 52, keeping house, and Fanny, 4 (or 11).

#142 was occupied by Moses B. Seargant, 63, farmer. Fred spells the name Sergeant and says he lived on a 20 acre farm just south of the N.G. Gorton farm with the house some distance from the road. The Sergeant farm was bought by Clark Gorton when the Sergeants and Frank Burnham and his wife Laura, who may have been a Sergeant, went west. Also living there in 1880 were Catherine, 53, Delia Knox or King, 33 (daughter), Hattie Seargant 12, and Retta C. Seargant, 10. Frank and Laura Burnham lived at one point in N. G. Gorton's tenant house and Laura took in washing. John and Lydia Burnham were born there.

#143 was occupied by David Carr, 40, farmer. Fred says he lived on the Squire Devine Place in Strongtown. With him were his wife Rosanna, 33 [Rose] and children Margery, 17, William, 15, Jane, 7. Carr's daughter Jennie married Joe Dobbs. Also listed at #143 are Albert Devine, 43, farmer, his wife, (name unreadable) 45, and children Gideon S., 20 and Joseph, 17.

#144 was occupied by Dewitt Bebee, 44, mason [d. March 1929 @ 94 in Harris] and his wife Elmira, 33. Also at #144 were Cyrus Strong, 75, farmer and his wife Mary, 70.

#145 was occupied by George Kilbourne, 72, farmer and his children (Daughter), 23 and Frank, 27, plus Etta Sutton, 19, servant and Archie Wood, 30, boarder.

#146 was occupied by Jane Wheat, 49 and children Alice, 15, Oscar, 11, Mary, 9, and Susan, 3. Jane Irons Wheat was the widow of Elbridge G. Wheat (1830-1879) and the mother of Gertrude, Mary, Edric, William, George, Edwin, Ella, Alice, Hannah, Oscar, Mamie, and Susie.

#147 was occupied by Simon Hornbeck, 67, farmer. Fred calls him Luke Hornbeck, which I believe is correct. Luke Hornbeck was born November 3, 1813. His wife Margaret, 50, was the widow of Alfred Gorton (1821-1872), oldest brother of N.G. Gorton. She was born Margaret Tremper (Dec. 17, 1828-Sept. 29, 1906). Living with them were her son Clark Gorton, 12 (May 20, 1868-Feb. 21, 1947), who married Mamie Carr (d. Feb. 24, 1958 @ 81), and their son Gideon Hornbeck, 11 (June 30, 1870-Mar. 25, 1942), who married Addie Holmes and was a farmer on Rt. 17 in Ferndale.

#148 was occupied by David Lounsberry, 73, farmer.

#149 was occupied by Seth Johnson, 28, laborer [buried July 12, 1917], his wife Harriet, 29, and their children Walter, 6, and Lewis, 3. Also listed at #149 were Lewis Burr, 56, farmer, his wife Ann, 55, and their children John, 24 and William, 22.

#150 was occupied by William A. Bebee, 43, carpenter, his wife Amelia, 30, and their children Steven (?), 15, William, 8, Charles, 6 and Gilbert, 2 (April 1878-Feb. 22, 1945).

#151 was occupied by William Ruforth (?), 21, tinsmith.

#152 was occupied by William Hornbeck, 72, farmer and his wife Anne H., 66, together with Catherine (?) Knapp, 63, a boarder

#153 was occupied by Caleb (?) Dewitt, 33, farmer. Later the site of the Queen Mountain House, this property was ½ mile east of School District #17 schoolhouse in Strongtown. Also in residence were wife Eliza, 44 and children George W., 10 (Oct. 16, 1869-Mar. 3, 1958), who went to work on the railroad at an early age, Miles, 8 (Dec. 4, 1871-July 12, 1942), and Frank, 6. Also living there was Horatio Smith, identified as Dewitt's stepson, 22. Fred identifies him as an uncle who lived to be 84. See Appendix III for more on Horatio. The household also included Mary Smith, stepdaughter, 20 and William (?) Peck, 52, servant.

#154 was occupied by Benjamin Van Inwegen, 49, farmer, known as "Stingy Ben" to Fred and his schoolmates, and his daughter Emma, 15.

#155 was occupied by William Bartholomew, 33, laborer. Billy Bartholomew was buried in Homer, NY on May 4, 1924. Also in the household were his wife Anthea, 26, called Anthy by Fred, who died Feb. 4, 1939 @ 86, and children Metta Ann, 7 [m. Stephen Harrison; d. Feb. 15, 1939 @ 67; see Appendix III for more information] and William G., 4 [Will; Jan. 7, 1876-Dec. 15, 1951; m. Emily (d. April 17, 1942)]. Also listed at #155 were George Smith, 40, laborer, his wife Sarah E., 29, and daughter Annie E., 3.

#156 was occupied by George Hill, 65, farmer, his wife Jerusha, 63, and their adopted children Jason Hill, 24, and Rebecca Hutchinson, 30, together with George Hutchinson, grandson, 5. See Appendix III for more.

#157 was occupied by Elias Raymond, 24, laborer, his wife Mary, 17 and his mother (or perhaps hers), Jane Slack, 64. Clark Meddaugh, 39, boarder, also lived there.

#158 was occupied by Joseph Raymond, 28, laborer [d. Jan. 15, 1936 @ 85 of stroke; lived in the woods near Mongaup Stream], his wife Emma, 22, and children George J., 2 [b. May 10, 1878; d. May 16, 1963; m. 1) Helen Sampson 2) Grace Gardner] and Ira, 4 months

#159 was occupied by Fredric Shaffer, 36, shoemaker, his wife Margaret, 33, and children Henrietta, 13, Julia, 10, Louisa, 4, and Ralf, 2.

#160 was occupied by John Slater, 43, blacksmith, his wife Sarah, 35, their children Austin E., 16, Charles, 14, (Son), 12, Ann (?), 9, Carrie, 4, Dora, 1, and Slater's father in law, 63.

#161 was occupied by Peter \_\_\_\_, 44, works in tannery, his wife Bridget, 35, and their children John, 17, Mary, 15, Ellen, 14, Kate, 12, Michael, 10, Martin, 7, Thomas, 2 and William, 2 months.

#162 was occupied by Joel Blackman, 42, farmer, his wife Eliza, 41, their daughter Carrie, 14, and Blackman's parents, Austin, 78, and Hurdy, 75.

#163 was occupied by Daniel T. Ratcliff, 55, farmer [Daniel Thomas Ratcliff d. Mar. 2, 1897 @ 72], his wife Margaret, 55 [93 on Dec. 14, 1908; died at 94] and their sons Charles, 20 and William, 17, and their daughter Mary, 13. William T. Ratcliff (April 5, 1863-Oct. 27, 1959) married Celia Hall on June 30, 1898. He was a cattle dealer. Mary died September 12, 1947 @ 81. She was a dressmaker.

#164 was occupied by David Hall, 52, farmer [d. June 10, 1893 @ 66], his wife Ann, 43 [Jerusha Ann Gorton; 1836-1910; sister of N.G. Gorton] and their daughter Celia, 7 [d. May 24, 1951 @ 77]. Also in residence were Reuben Huntington, 20, laborer [d. Sept. 1, 1933 @ 75 in Ferndale] Huntington was a policeman later in life. His wife Margie d. April 5, 1950 @ 86.

To Gill's sister, Jerusha Ann, we owe a debt of gratitude. Ann married David Hall.

*He wasn't a bit religious, so Ann would not marry him unless he sought religion, so at a protracted service he pretended to accept Christ as his savior and a little later Ann and David were married. Soon he lost faith, and Celia was born in due time. Then Ann started family devotion in the home. He knelt in morning worship but she done all the praying and read a chapter in the Bible. He was a good provider.*

David Hall also kept a diary, in which the activities of the Gortons played a large part. All of the entries Fred copied from the diary are in Appendix I. On February 12, 1879:

*N.G. Gorton traded his white Kate mare to Ike Gorton for a sorrel four year old mare.*



*Jerusha Ann Gorton Hall*



*Isaac (Ike) Gorton*

And on August 11, 1880:

*Jacob Becker traded the oxen he got of Gill Gorton for a white mare and got \$25 to boot.*

On June 20, 1882, when his twins were not quite four years old, Gill raised a new barn. It was framed with wooden braces on each corner which had wooden pins to hold them fast. All the framing was done by Grant Gorton, Gill's uncle, but at least a dozen men with pike poles came to raise up the bents. When they were done, Lucy served crullers and cider, the earliest event her son Fred would later be able to remember. David Hall was there too, and recorded in his diary that Gill got the barn finished "so as to put hay in."

Young Freddy's second earliest memory was of an event later that same year. Mrs. Lewis Wheeler, a neighbor, came to Old Hickory with her baby daughter, Angeline. During the course of their visit it became necessary to change Angie's diaper. Freddy, being an inquisitive child, decided to take a peek when Angie's long-skirted dress was pulled up. "Look and you will see all," his mother remarked. He was so embarrassed that his face turned a bright red.

In February of 1883, Gill bought Major, a chestnut sorrel colt with white feet and a star on his forehead. He paid \$100. It is likely that this was the same colt who figured in Freddy's next adventure. It was summer when David Hall wrote:

*Fred Gorton broke his right leg on July 19, 1883 toward night by falling through the pitch hole from the barn floor to the basement floor and it was set by Doctor Perry and Doctor Robertson the afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup>.*

Freddy had been playing with the other Gorton children in the new hay in the hay mow and had grown thirsty, but when he started toward the house to get a drink, he slipped and slid through the hay hole. His leg struck the manger pole and when he tried to stand up he found he could not. He called for help, but none of the children would come to his rescue. Only his oldest sister, Janette, by then nearly twelve, had sense enough to run and fetch their father. Many years later, Fred could still recall what happened next:

*Father came and I told him I couldn't get up. He felt of my leg. He picked me up, letting the right leg hang down, and carried me into the house. The broken leg acted like it had an extra joint and it began to hurt, but if I laid very still on Mother's bed it didn't hurt at all. Father went to Liberty to see if Doctor Webster would set the leg, but the doctor said, "Since you found fault with the way I set your wrist when your colt kicked you and broke it, I won't set your boy's leg, but if you want it amputated, I'll cut it off for him."*

Fortunately, Gill decided to find another doctor and heard about Doctor Perry and Doctor Robertson of Woodbourne. They agreed to come the next day, a Sunday afternoon, and set the leg.

*The doctor poured something from a bottle into a handkerchief and put it on my nose. I could smell something unusual. I started to count but by the time I counted thirty I was asleep.*

He awoke with a loud holler, according to his brothers and sisters.

The convalescence was uncomfortable. The doctor tied a seven pound weight on his ankle with a rope hung over the footboard. Then, the next time Doctor Robertson came, he put on a cast, but in those days it was a wooden splint that looked like a big tray and encased the leg from thigh to ankle. It made getting up without help impossible. One time, when the entire family was at dinner, Freddy was "taken short and couldn't wait" and when his mother, who didn't want to be disturbed while eating, failed to respond to his calls, he "let fly right in the sheets." "I was sorry," he later wrote, "and so, I think, was my mother."

Overall, Freddy was accorded special treatment during his time in bed. Someone gave him a color picture book. One illustration showed a large dog, and under it was a rhyme which read:

*We are singing, Floss. Be quiet now.  
Your song is only Bow Wow Wow.  
You don't keep time. You cannot speak.  
We told you so one day last week.  
So just wag your tail and hold your tongue  
Until our pretty song is sung.*



*Lucy Misner Gorton at 28*



*N. G. Gorton at 30*

Erastus Bush, who had come to see Gill, gave Freddy his first six-square red pencil. (Bush died in 1910 at the age of 73.) When Gill bought four little black pigs, the invalid was carried out to see them. This was, however, only because his cousin James got tired of all the "noise about the pigs." By this time, James H. Gorton was living with N.G. and Lucy Gorton

Eventually, the doctor took off the wooden case and replaced it with a bandage wound around the broken part some twenty times and held together by a flour-like paste. This cast was about three-quarters of an inch thick and allowed Freddy to get up. By the time the doctor came on his fifth visit, the patient was out running, cast and all, in the orchard. The bandages came off then to reveal a pure white area where the cast had been. The healing process had taken three weeks. [Editor's Note: This story was the inspiration for my children's historical novel, *Julia's Mending* (1987)]

In the 1880s children died from injuries and disease far more frequently than they do today. The Gortons were extraordinarily lucky, but two of Fred's earliest memories were of funerals for children. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Snyder Morris, who lived a half mile east of the Strongtown school, died shortly after Fred and Floyd acquired new matched suits. They wore them for the first time to serve as pall bearers. Together with two other boys, they bore the small coffin from the schoolhouse, where the funeral had been held, to the wagon that would take it to the cemetery, probably the one in Liberty. They were told to place their hats on the

casket while they carried it. What impressed Freddy, however, was the fact that the bereaved mother yelled "Glenna! Glenna!" all through the service and "never let up to take a breath."

The second funeral was that of one of the Sergeant children, a little girl who lived on the twenty acre farm just south of Old Hickory and had been ill for a long time. The family was very poor so when she died all the neighbors helped out. Gill Gorton used his light lumber wagon for a hearse, sitting atop the box coffin when he took it to the cemetery for burial.

Liberty Falls, later renamed Ferndale, was described in the 1872-3 Gazetteer of Towns as: "situated in the south-east part, on the Middle Mongaup . . . a station on the NY. & O. Midland RR and contains one hotel, a school house, two stores, two groceries, one grist mill, one upper and one sole leather tannery, three saw mills, one wagon shop, a blacksmith shop, a shoe shop, and about one hundred inhabitants." A note adds that the railroad, when completed, would cross the creek at this place on a bridge 1,100 feet long and 100 feet high. On October 8, 1882 the new iron railroad trestle was completed. It rose 102 feet into the air above the stream. The depot building was completed by September 1887.

The Gorton children attended school in the Strongtown schoolhouse, however, in District #17, south of the farm. On the twins' first day the teacher asked them their names and then wrote them on tablets. When she wrote "Fred Gorton" and told him that was his name he told her he didn't believe it. He had never seen his name written down before.

The school had desks all around its sides and a stove in the middle. It took sticks of wood about 3' in length and was used to toast bread at noon. The pupils sat on backless benches when Fred first went to school but later the district acquired patent seats with desks to write on.

At noon the children usually went outdoors to play. They engaged in such games as "dog and fox in the woods" and "dog and deer" and the boys played baseball in a field belonging to Ben Van Inwegan, known as "Stingy Ben." Fred was not allowed to join in because he liked to step out of line and hit every ball the pitcher threw.

One boy, Charles Crispell [see Appendix III], came to Strongtown School after starting school in another district. He gave Freddy a black eye and this probably led to some boxing lessons for all the Gorton boys. By the last fight between them, Freddy was capable of clobbering Charlie, but he had hit him in the face so many times that he grew ashamed of himself and let the fight be called a draw.

Across the road from the schoolhouse was a stone wall four feet high over which the children placed a plank to use as a teeter totter. Freddy used to teeter with Minnie Tompkins and some others. Young Fred also played house. A few of the boys had favorite girls with whom they kept house. They would pace off spaces ten feet square and gather moss from logs to put down as carpet. Hattie Crispell (Mrs. Paul Richter; d. Nov. 8, 1962 @ 79; had 14 children) was Fred's first "wife" but later he kept house with Angie Wheeler. Angie and Freddy also played "horse" in which Freddy took a bit in his mouth or a line under his arms and Angie "drove" him. He could run faster than any of the other boys, so Angie called him Black Beauty after the horse in a newly published book.

Freddy's younger brother Leslie was also interested in little girls. He would sit in the second seat in the schoolroom and use a looking glass to watch them in the back row. One day the teacher, Floyd Kinney (d. July 1963 @ 87), caught him and got so mad that he pulled Leslie out of his seat by his collar, pinned him to the wall, and nearly choked him.



Some time later Floyd Kinney was replaced by John Robison. One day Robison was seen coming out of the girls' privy by Floyd and Ai Gorton. They started a story going around that he had been in there with one of the girls. It took three days for the gossip to get back to Robison, but when it did he dismissed all the girls from school and kept the boys. Then he called them out one by one to question them. Freddy was first. Fortunately, he knew nothing about it and convinced the teacher of his innocence. It was Floyd who got a well-deserved thrashing. When Robison came to Ai, however, he told the older Gorton boy that he was too big to thrash. Ai agreed and escaped punishment.

*The Gorton family:*

*Back row:*

*Janette*

*George*

*Grace*

*Ai*

*Center row:*

*N.G.*

*Lucy*

*Fred*

*Front row:*

*Cecil*

*Leslie*

*Floyd*



Every year on Arbor Day, "Stingy Ben" Van Inwegan allowed the older children from Strongtown School to take up trees from his property and transplant them in the schoolyard. When Fred was five feet tall and old enough to be allowed to participate he chose a spruce tree the same height as himself and planted it next to the woodhouse. He was always to have a green thumb. The next year he dug up some mayflowers, reset them dirt and all, and landscaped his tree. The tree, which was given the name Benjamin Franklin, survived four others planted at the same time, including Cassie Wheeler's Martha Washington and Charlie Crispell's George Washington.

The Strongtown School closed three weeks earlier than the Huntington School, so Gill Gorton arranged for three of his sons to attend the latter during those weeks. Fred did not last. He made a false face out of black oilcloth with holes cut in it for his eyes, nose, and mouth, and used it to scare Johnny Loder (d. Jan. 28, 1935 @ about 48). Johnny's father (Harrison Loder, who d. Jan. 31, 1924 @ 80 while on an ice pond laughing at a fellow putting a cake of ice through a hole) was a trustee of the Huntington School and when his little boy declared that he

would not go to school as long as Fred Gorton was there, Loder had Fred turned out. Fred showed him the black face and tried to prove he hadn't done anything so terrible, but Loder would not change his mind.

Gill Gorton's determination to have his sons well educated is shown by another incident too. During the year of the great blizzard, 1888, he constructed a "covered wagon" of blankets on a box four feet by twelve and used it to take the children back and forth to school. He and Will Wheeler took turns driving the team of oxen.

The Gorton and Wheeler boys did not share their parents' fervor. The Charles Kilbourne Pond was near the school (a saw mill with a bull wheel to draw logs out was located there) and the boys often went there on their lunch hours in winter to skate. One day they cut some holes in the ice and while two or three of them skated to the dam and drove sucker fish up the pond the others snared them as they passed. In the course of the afternoon they caught about a dozen one pound suckers and got back to the school at about three o'clock. The teacher refused to let any of them back inside except Leslie, the youngest of their number, but he did not tell their parents. The older boys waited in Clark Gorton's barn near the school until it was time to go home, but the Wheelers were afraid to take any fish. The young Gortons convinced their parents that the entire catch had been made during lunch hour.

When he was about seven, Freddy made himself a pipe by scraping out a corn cob for a bowl and adding a stem made from a piece of second growth maple with a pith in the middle. In this he smoked dried corn silk and the dried blossom tops of hard tack. The latter made a good deal of smoke but also made Freddy's tongue sore. A schoolmate, Gilbert Beebe, chewed tobacco, and gave Freddy some, which he tried and liked, but he was afraid that either smoking or chewing tobacco would prove habit forming and so refrained from using it altogether.

Fred had assigned chores at home from an early age. The first was to split the kindling for the next day's cook stove fire. Later he milked a short legged cow named Peanut morning and night. By the time he was eight he was also milking one called Topsy. There was always something to keep the boys busy on the farm. They raked hay after the hay wagon and loaded hay in the field. They picked up stones off the meadow and were sent to turn the steers, Tom and Jerry, out to pasture. This had an element of danger. The pair, who were dark red in color, fought every time they were turned loose. The pair of oxen, Ike and Lazarus, were fattened up and butchered when they got too old to work.

One year the boys shingled the woodhouse with hemlock shingles made on the spot by an expert named Bill Davidson. He used a special bench he had designed himself, a contraption somewhat like a vise, which he operated with his feet while using a drawing knife to smooth the sides of the wood. Another year the Gorton boys dug a cellar on the Lane Lot, a thirteen acre property Gill bought from Thomas Lane. Later, with Fred's help, he would build a cottage there, but the first year he had it he planted the land with buckwheat. Tunis Misner, Gill's father in law, gave him his five foot hay rake at that time. The head was a foot across and had fifteen evenly spaced teeth. The boys used it to rake after the hay wagon and found it a great time saver compared to the little hand rakes they had been using.

The buckwheat on the Lane Lot proved popular with the chickens belonging to Druscilla Wickes, who lived across the road. It was legal to shoot such trespassers, but not to keep and eat them, so the Gorton boys had target practice and then threw the dead birds into their owner's dooryard. The Gortons did not do well by Druscilla. On another occasion, when her cow got an

apple caught in her throat, she called Gill to dislodge it. He tried everything he knew, including throwing the cow on the barn floor and hitting it in the neck with a mallet. This probably did smash the apple, but it also killed the cow. She was buried in a special burying area for horses and cows on the Gorton farm.

When Freddy reached nine he was considered old enough to walk the three and a half miles to Liberty on errands. One frequent destination was an elderly cobbler on Church Street. Casper Liedman put half soles on their leather boots. On such trips, Fred, Floyd, and Leslie were usually given five cents each to spend. Fred bought marbles (ten for a nickel) or gum, but Floyd and Leslie always bought candy.

On the Fourth of July the boys walked to Liberty because the merchants always had something going on to entertain young folks. One year, on Charles Young's front lawn, there were two peacocks. The male was strutting and showing off his feathers, one of the wonders of the world as far as a small boy was concerned. Another Fourth, Freddy won two dollars in a wheelbarrow race. His brother Ai was also in the race, but he crashed, and Freddy ran around him to win. The same day he took second in the sack race in spite of a fall of his own. Often there were parades with soldiers and bands marching. Fife and drum corps were considered fine music in those days before radio.

Circuses and other traveling shows also made frequent appearances in Liberty. In 1883 it was the Bonnell & Company Circus. One year a show was coming to the Liberty House lawn and the Gorton children were to go to the parade, but their father had chores to do first and pattered about so long with them that they missed all but two show wagons with animals in them. That year money must have been tight because Gill refused the pleading of seven children and would not buy tickets to get them into the show. He was not ungenerous. In 1887, he bought an organ for Janette, and the same year he took his daughter Grace along when he and Will Carr and Will Ratcliff went to the fair at Newburgh.

When Fred was about eleven he did get to go to the circus. Again it was held at the Liberty House. This was a well known hotel, located next to the Methodist Church.

*It being our first show we laughed so loud that a woman "blew her top" but it didn't stop us in the least. It cost perhaps ten cents. Another time Liberty had a tent show on the Mansion House lawn that cost five cents. They put up wooden seats. I don't remember the name of the show. Later a horse show located on Mill Street. One man handled eight horses and it was a sight to see the different things he made them do.*

Lucy Gorton's opinions had a great influence on those formed by her son. She told him, for example, that Abe Lincoln freed the slaves because so many of them had white blood, the result of plantation owners fathering "the wenches' children." John Newton Clements (d. July 9, 1937 @ 84) told him that the north couldn't make the south surrender until they burned their wheat fields and starved the southerners into submission. "The northern soldiers even smashed up their pianos, a wanton destruction for no cause at all."

Lucy joined the Free Methodist Church at Strongtown, built in 1887. It was dedicated for worship on April 26, 1888. At one point she tried to convince Fred to become a minister. He declined. In contrast to Lucy, Gill refused to join any church and vowed to die the way he had lived.

Fred attended preaching by a minister named Thicket who had a long black beard and was rumored to have fathered a child by a fourteen-year-old girl. Sometimes, when he was preaching, tears fell from his eyes onto the floor. Chances are the gossip grew from knowledge of an infamous case in Boston where a minister got a pretty choir girl with child and poisoned her trying to abort the pregnancy.

1888 was the year of the blizzard. A record low temperature was reached on February 10<sup>th</sup> when the mercury hit -24. Then, on March 12<sup>th</sup>, the snows came. There were drifts up to twelve feet deep and they lasted until April 18<sup>th</sup>. The railroad was tied up for a week and on the Gorton farm the drifts were so high that the boys had to melt water for their twenty-five cows to drink. They could not get through to the spring on the back lot. This experience prompted Gill to put a windmill over the spring which pumped water into a cistern above the orchard. From then on there was a good force of water both in the barn and in the house, where Lucy soon installed a bathtub.

On October 12, 1888, Samuel Clark Jenkins, who lived next to the Liberty Falls School, was returning home from a trip to Liberty when he was hit by the milk train at Gerow's Crossing. He was thrown up into the air and landed straddling the engine boiler. His buckboard wagon was demolished and both Jenkins and the horse died of their injuries. He was eighty-four.

While Fred took a natural interest in such local disasters he also had milder interests. One was watching swallows. After the tannery in Liberty Falls was discontinued, chimney swallows moved into the forty foot high chimney. One time the boys counted fifty swallows entering the chimney in the early evening. There were also swallows in the Gorton barn. It was fifty feet wide and at one time there were a dozen nests under the eaves on the west side.

Fred considered himself more responsible than his brothers. In apple season the boys had to gather apples and put them in the wagon and then load some thirty bushels of them onto the train. This brought in four dollars. One year, when their parents had gone to Liberty to do some trading, four of the boys spent the entire afternoon having apple fights. Only Fred kept gathering apples, but when the money was divided this dedication got no reward. Gill heard Fred's complaint but his decision was "share and share alike."

Fred and Floyd had a harrowing experience on their way home from school one day. They decided to cut through David Carr's orchard, a walled-in one acre lot occupied by three cows and a bull. They got over the wall and were halfway to the far side when the bull bellowed and charged. Fred was encumbered by a 12' fishpole, a bait can, and a lunch pail, but he managed to get a toe hold in the five foot wall and throw himself over. He landed in a heap in the Carr garden. The bull, right behind him, stuck his head over the wall and bellowed again, but Fred was safe. He does not record how Floyd escaped. Although they were twins, they were not identical and do not seem to have spent any more time together than non-twin brothers.

On September 9, 1889, Fred was picking pears on the farm when a man came along and asked him if it was true his sister Grace was getting married that day. It was the first Fred had heard of it, and Grace had just turned sixteen, but she did in fact marry Charles Farquhar on that date. If they were married without Gill's consent, he soon forgave them, for he built a cottage for them on the Lane Lot. Fred helped, using a wooden lathe 4' long and 1½' wide.

A year later, Grace lost her first baby, a little boy, and the funeral was held at Old Hickory. It was the custom then to have singing at funerals, but the Gorton children cried so

hard at this one that the singers got too choked up to continue. At a later funeral, that of their Uncle David Hall, Fred and Floyd shared a handkerchief between them and shed many tears during the service.

Fred was still quite young, not yet a teenager, but he was leaving childhood behind him at a rapid pace. At twelve, he was expected to earn money on his own.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE YOUTH

The Gorton boys, all except George, who couldn't saw a board off straight, built rabbit traps out of old boards at the farm and used them to trap rabbits that they sold to Fred Sanford at ten cents each. When the season was over, Fred sold the traps, too, five of them to Charlie Crispell for fifty cents.

A bit more about the Sanford family: Fred Sanford (d. May 28, 1951 @ 81) married Nellie Buchanan, a school teacher. They also took in summer boarders. Irving Sanford committed suicide while living with his brother Fred, on September 25, 1935 @ 64. Carrie Sanford (Mrs. Henry W. Ackerly) died on May 1, 1933 @ 71 at her girlhood home on Smith Hill.

Fred Gorton almost lost his life before he ever had a chance to go off and work, as he recounts:

*Father borrowed a horse of Clark Gorton in haying time to rake hay. When I was returning it after supper, riding bareback and bare footed, all at once the horse bolted, lowering its head. I went flying over the horse's head. If I had landed on my head, it might have been fatal, a broken neck, but I lit on my feet in the road and didn't get hurt at all. I walked the rest of the way.*

One day Fred spent eight hours holding bags while buffalo feed from a railroad car at the switch at the Strongtown crossing was shoveled into them. Orlando Monroe was in charge and when they were done he asked Fred if fifty cents was enough. Unfortunately, "Father was present and said twenty-five cents was plenty for a boy of thirteen years. Don't ask me if I was mad!"

Later Orlando Monroe (d. 1938) married Anna L. Mould (Aug. 15, 1865-Dec. 3, 1962), daughter of Charles and Charlotte Bennett Mould. Her first husband was Charles Phillips (d. Dec. 7, 1924).

Earning money was never easy. Another time Will Ratcliff lost a new born calf and said Fred could have the skin if he went over and skinned it himself. Fred walked the two miles and back to do it and sold the skin for twenty-five cents.

In 1891, the Tig Tag Tunnel near Fallsburgh was finished and the first passenger train passed through on June 25<sup>th</sup>. The tunnel cost \$300.00, a great sum in those days. There always seemed to be work being done on the railroad. Fred's father "stabled three teams of horses while the Strongtown trestle was being filled. They made a tunnel under the trestle six feet high and four feet wide and I went through it at that time."

Like many people in the area, Gill Gorton took in renters and boarders when he could.

*Gid Young and his wife lived in part of our home and when his alarm went off it would wake us up as Floyd and I slept just over their rooms. Tony Meek and his wife rented the Little Barn next to our spring in the north pasture and his wife used to carry water in a wash tub on her head and a pail of water in each hand besides.*

In 1893, the cottage on the next lot was rented to Willis Meyer, the Free Methodist minister who preached in Liberty Falls and in Briscoe, eight miles away.

*One night he hadn't gotten home by one o'clock. His wife began to pray at the top of her voice. Our home was 400' away so it woke all of us up. Father threatened to shoot the gun off but the minister got home safely.*

This was the era of the large boarding house. In 1886, *Summer Homes* listed three farmhouses in the Liberty Falls area with guest accommodations: W. K. Loder, Mrs. W. W. Bartholomew, and John Clements. As former Sullivan County Historian Manville B. Wakefield puts it: "Ferndale, Liberty Falls in those bucolic years, was a microcosm of the pioneer farm boarding house industry in Sullivan County. By 1910 four 'classic' farm boarding houses were located more or less within walking distance of John T. Clark's famous pavilion on Lake Ophelia—the Clements Lake Farm House, the Nichols Boarding House, the Pinney House, and the Ferndale Villa." The Nichols Boarding House later gained worldwide fame as Grossinger's Hotel.

Fred's first real job was working for Cynthia Ernhout, his mother's sister, at her house in Liberty. [Cynthia Misner Ernhout (May 27, 1833-Nov. 19, 1903)]He earned \$3.00 for ten days work plus a tip of fifty cents. Cynthia's husband, Henry Ernhout, built the White Sulphur Springs House in what was then called Robertsonville. According to Fred, Uncle Henry was responsible for changing Robertsonville to White Sulphur Springs because he made a pond in the brook, put in four barrels of sulphur, and began to sell baths to the city people for twenty-five cents a bath.

Fred's next job was with Aaron Stanton.[d. Nov. 30, 1941 @ 76; m. Lillie Beebe, daughter of Richard; she d. Sept. 16, 1964 @ 94] He spent two weeks haying for him, earned \$9.00, and boarded with his Aunt Ann Hall. This was in July, 1893. David Hall had died in June. Ann kept up his diary. In October of that year his brother Ai left home for good and took Fred's place at their Aunt Cynthia's.

Living in Liberty village, even for brief periods, would have been very different from life on the farm. There was no electric power yet but there was a man named Harry Atkins who drove a two-wheeled gig and lit kerosine street lights at nightfall. Fred saw his first moving picture in the Music Hall over B.F. Green's store.

*It was hard to believe in a picture where the horses stopped for a drink in the brook. I think I attended a clam bake in the Schaeffer and Lennon Grove the same day. Later my brother Cecil rented the hall but made a failure. He couldn't get the good shows as he didn't have connections with the right people.*

Another brother, Leslie, got into some trouble at about this time.



*Three boys at Ferndale about twelve years old got some blasting powder at the blacksmith's shop and put it in the anvil in a hole 3" square. They covered it up and set it off, making a loud noise. The second time they tried it a little spark was left in the hole and when the powder was put in an explosion burned brother Leslie's eyebrows and eye lashes off. He was blinded for three days.*

When Fred was fourteen and his brother George eighteen, they took two jobs together. They strung telephone poles from Ferndale to the Strongtown Church.

*With Father's team we tied a rag on the hind wheel of the wagon and counted the revolutions to measure the distance between one pole location to another. Lewis Wheeler refused to let them put any poles on his property as he owned both sides of the road. Cassie and Mrs. Wheeler sat over the holes dug on his roadside. Old Lew pushed one of the men, and they arrested him and took him to Monticello. The men dug two extra holes while the women sat over the first two and set two poles while Old Wheeler was in Monticello and strung a wire from one new pole to the other. Mr. Wheeler threatened to chop them down but he got counsel and decided not to get his fingers burned.*

In August, when the dust on the road was thick, Fred and George drove twenty-three head of cows from a half mile above Liberty village to Warwick in Orange County, a distance of thirty-eight miles. They spent one night in Middletown, where the maid told them they ought to get a bath but neither would. They took the O&W train home. The drover paid for their tickets, but their father didn't give them anything for two days of driving cattle.

The Gorton boys dug a round pond on Old Hickory in August of 1893. It took three weeks to finish because they had to dig black muck out of an area 100' across and 7' deep. It was a very dry season and the weather hot, so while the boys dug their father held and filled the scraper and between times sat under a 5' umbrella used for advertising by the Liberty merchant whose name was on it. The boys drove a yoke of bulls, Dan and Noten, and a team of horses, Topsy and Daisy, to help them, and spread potters clay on the bottom until it was as smooth as a house floor. The pond was filled with surface water.

*We started to build a dam across the gully below the pond, but Father said the water backing up would kill the trees above. I still think with a boat we would have a better and longer ride and running water besides, but Father was the boss. We went swimming naked and it was in sight of the highway. Later we stocked the pond with bullheads or catfish from the Hilldale or Jackson Smith Pond. The Hilldale Lake was at one time a sawmill owned by Jackson Smith. This place was formerly known as Jockey Hollow. This pond is a half mile long and reaches nearly to the Brown Hotel on Loch Sheldrake Road. Many fine pickerel have been caught in a tip up through the ice and in summer catfish are good eating.*

The boys often caught fish in the pond with a bob. A bob was "fish worms strung and tied together like a ball." In winter they cut ice and sold it to neighbors who came with bobsleds to

draw it home. Their father gave them a cent a cake for cutting it. Sad to say, the Rt. 17 Quickway now runs right through the Gorton pond and "destroyed it and many good meadows."

In January of 1894, four of the Gorton boys were at home with the measles. Horace Wheeler caught them and they rapidly spread through the entire school. On one occasion they were left alone while Gill went to Joel Crispell's [Joel Crispell (1845-1898) m. Anna Salina Sparling (d. Nov. 4, 1914 @60)] to turn a calf that was coming wrong end to. Fred was put in charge. This meant he had to fetch water for his brothers and comfort Leslie, who was cold and convinced that he was dying. All in all, however, the boys had the time of their lives while they were recovering. They didn't have to work, and one day they found some chunks of blasting powder the size of kernels of corn.

*We made a cannon out of a piece of wood 4" in diameter and bored an inch hole about 10" deep and made a small hole for a fuse used in blasting rocks. We ground the blasting powder in an old coffee grinder with a crank. To try it out we just put in one or two kernels of powder and it didn't spark so we put in a half handful at a time and ground it up ready to use. We put some powder in the cannon and used paper tamped in tight over the powder, then inserted a bolt. I touched a match to the fuse in the little hole and it blew the bolt out with a loud bang. It sure was fun. I still wonder why the coffee mill didn't blow up and maybe blow our heads off.*

Young Fred was relatively free of illness. Only one man in Liberty caught the dread smallpox, around 1890, because fear of the disease had led to vaccination. In the Liberty area the serum was provided by the Crispell family but Fred refused to be vaccinated because he believed the Crispells had scrofula of the blood. He was also reluctant because he had heard of another boy who had the serum in the arm, then in the leg because it didn't take, then in both the arm and the leg, and had ended up laid up for a week when it finally worked. The doctors worked twenty hours a day trying to vaccinate everyone, but Fred eluded them. Fortunately, he did not catch smallpox. The next epidemic was chicken pox. He did catch that, but suffered no ill effects.

On Saturday nights the young men of Liberty Falls congregated at the Manion store. There was no dance hall, no radio, no television. The middle class had victrolas, but farm boys did not. In the 1890s platform dances came into vogue. The first in the area was in part of Jim Wheeler's house in Stevensville (now Swan Lake). Its music was provided by someone playing accordion or violin and passing the hat after. From 9PM until 1AM, eight couples at a time could dance. Another dance platform was built near the Liberty Depot in Schaeffer and Lennon Grove, where the Conductors' Clambakes were held until 1898.

Fred was still in school at this time but he, Floyd, and Leslie went to Liberty, where they paid tuition of \$5.00 as non-residents. One year the professor gave Fred a receipt but forgot to enter it on the stub. Later Frank Dodge (Frank M. Dodge d. March 14, 1955 @ 88; m. Nettie Chapman (d. Dec. 12, 1936); of Young, Messiter and Dodge) of the school board came to the farm to collect but Fred's father had always told him to save receipts, so he was able to find it in his trunk and save having to pay twice.

Because they had not been taught grammar at Strongtown school, the Gortons had to take fifth grade grammar in Liberty, but Fred did excel in drawing and was also in an advanced class with four girls. He walked home for a time with Edna Baker, who lived on his way.

*Her father thought I wasn't the right kind of boy to be in his daughter's company. I never asked her why she didn't walk along with me anymore but many years after he bragged about it and told me she never went along with me after that. Had I known how he felt about it, I would have made an effort to see her on the sly. She never married and he denied himself a grandchild.*

Before long, Fred was commuting by bicycle. He bought his first bike from his brother Ai when he was fourteen for \$1.25, never learned to ride it, and sold it to Leslie for \$2.00 ten months later. This was his first speculation. When he did learn to ride he got the nickname Scorcher because he could cover the distance between Liberty school and the farm in eleven minutes.

*One day when I was scorching through the village just past the Steenrod Bridge, two boys were playing horse with lines on. They passed right in front of me and I was going so fast I couldn't stop and hit John Ernhout (d. Feb. 13, 1954 @ 63; m. Edna Grant, who d. May 15, 1966 @77) and skinned his leg. I came back to see if he was hurt but he denied it. Some years later he told me he got an ugly gash on his leg.*

The second winter the boys boarded with their Aunt Cynthia from Monday night to Friday and their father came for them on Friday after school. They still did a lot of traveling on foot, however. One day Fred decided to go to Stevensville to visit Eunice Wheeler, a girl who had kissed him after a Free Methodist service.

*The Jim Wheeler farm was 1½ miles south of Stevensville store (Stevensville was 5½ miles south of Liberty) and all of them thought I had a horse in Stevensville. I was very tired in school the next day.*

*One day as I came along to Hoos bakery there was a boy with a bag of evergreen. It was just before Christmas. Ralph Fisk (d. Oct. 25, 1938 @ 55; lineman) grabbed the heavy bag and tried to hit me with it. I ducked and the plate glass in Hoos's window was smashed. It cost his mother \$25. The Hoos family had a set of twins, too, Fred and Hank. Fred had two fingers off which he got caught in his father's ice cream freezer. The Hoos boys used to tread the bread dough with their bare feet.*

On August 31, 1894, David Hall's diary (at that point being kept by his widow, Ann) contains the following note, amended by Fred:

*We with brother Gill came home on the way to the Falls. He fell from the wagon and was quite bad hurt. (Fred Gorton witnessed the fall and grabbed the wheel to prevent his getting run over. We were taking Celia to the train for New Paltz College.)*

There is some discrepancy here as Fred elsewhere lists her as one of his teachers in Strongtown. He does not mention his father's injury again.

Aaron Stanton bought the Hall farm, which he had been working before, in 1894, and hired Fred and Floyd to cut twenty-four cords of stove wood that winter. By then the Halls were in Liberty.

Also in Liberty was a girl named Abbie Bengel. At sixteen, Fred took her to a camp meeting in Gerow Grove, later the site of the Triangle Diner. There were large maple trees there. He owned no overcoat and it was late fall so when they stopped on the way back to her home to sit on a large rock she generously gave him part of her long skirt to sit on. Back at her house, since her parents were then in Germany, her sisters Rose and Libbie chaperoned. [see Appendix III for more on the Bengel family.]

*A stuffed tabby cat about 15" high was sitting on the floor next to Abbie. I sat across the room so when I looked in another direction she grabbed tabby and socked me, throwing it very hard so it knocked my wind out. She said she was sorry but I think it delighted her to get the best of me. I went to Orange County to work and never called on her again.*

For awhile, however, he didn't think he was going to make it home. He took a short cut through the woods in back of her home that led to the Free Methodist Church and halfway there, on a night so dark he had to look at the stars to find his direction, he heard a bobcat cry out.

*A shrill scream, and then a sobbing noise, like a baby after being spanked. My hat raised up and nearly fell off. I was never so scared in my life. I expected the bobcat would scratch out my eyes. These cats, sometimes called wildcats, reach up to thirty pounds when grown and will pounce on a deer's head, cut the jugular vein, and have venison for a week. I reached the highway safely and never went through that woods again.*

While Fred had remained on the farm, his brother Floyd had taken a job with Clark Gorton. He got \$15 and board for three months' work. Clark owned land by the Strongtown school but also bought the Sergeant place and Floyd used to come there with the team to plow and put in crops. One day he left the team for a moment and they ran home.

*We used to have a green box to put our savings in when we were growing up. Floyd spent most of his money. I saved mine and Father would always make up the difference at New Years because we were twins. But when Floyd brought home the \$45 it was too much for Father to give me to match. I got nothing.*

It was this sort of thing that prompted Fred to leave home. It was an accepted fact that the farm would go to George, the oldest son. In fact, as his father had done with him before, Gill made an arrangement to lease the farm to George, give him a quarter of the milk check, and give him board. The younger brothers "milked all the cows and all George did was fodder them." While George drove cows for Will Ratcliff, "we foolishly washed his milk cans for ten cents." George cut no wood, nor did he help Fred and Leslie draw out the thirty-nine loads of manure using Maud and Daisy for a team.

Milk was a profitable source of income most years. Gill kept twenty-five cows and shipped four forty-quart cans of milk a day to New York City on the O&W. They charged ten

cents a can freight and half the milk bill was depleted for feed during the year, so one year farmers got only forty-seven cents a can for milk. A good milk cow sold for \$35 and a newly born calf for \$1.00.

Fred worked for Will Ratcliff for two months, receiving \$17.00 plus board. One evening they had two or three loads of hay all cocked up ready to draw in and a thunder shower came up. Will asked Fred to help get a load of hay in after supper and by dark they drove into the barn just as it began to pour. He gave Fred ten cents. If he had given him twenty-five cents, Fred would have been pleased, but as it was his discontent was growing.

He did get one day off during that summer, to go to Hurleyville for the grand opening of a hotel that had just changed management. It was July 2<sup>nd</sup> and they had a greased pig race. Fred caught the pig, but Ben Kyle (who later married Emma Van Inwegen) took it away from him. In a wheelbarrow race he won over Link Lawrence and got a silver watch, but it wouldn't run unless the case was open.

On July 7, 1896, Fred's opportunity to escape came. One Charles Calkins (Jan. 1, 1872-Nov. 22, 1956; Harris, N.Y.), farmhand for Miss Martha Reeves, came to Old Hickory to ask Gill if he had a boy who wanted a job. Fred was quick to offer himself at \$17.00 a month for four months if washing as well as board was included. The farm was in Orange County, between Middletown and the little hamlet of Slate Hill, and Fred got on the train at the Strongtown crossing without saying goodbye to anyone, not even his sister Janette, who had put a little Testament in his luggage. She wrote to him quite often while he was away, but he didn't pay much attention to her advice or her Bible.

Miss Reeves was about fifty years old and owned the 110 acre farm and a locked shed in Middletown. Fred tied the horse there when he took her into the town to do her shopping. The farm, which was known for its chestnut, black walnut, and butternut trees, housed thirty cows and a dog named Hubert who helped herd. Most of the work, however, was done by the three hired men—Fred, Calkins, and Will Freeman. They were up at 5AM to milk, did the haying, cut corn, and raised wheat which they took to the mill to be ground into flour. They were rarely done until 7 at night.

The David Reeves farm cornered with Martha Reeves's place and for a time Fred called on Cora Calkins there, but Cora called him a little fraud and laughed at him. She never went out with him and later married Fred Bengel. Martha Reeves's hired girl was Grace McIntosh (m. John Van Allen of Middletown), a redhead, and when her sister Hattie (d. Sept. 18, 1963 @ 88; Mrs. George Alexandria), who had glaring black hair, and a friend, came to visit her, Fred and Will Freeman took them to Midway Park to a show that evening. Afterwards

*the girls suggested we go for a walk out in the woods apart from anyone, which we did. Hattie suggested we separate, but both of us being timid souls didn't know the score, so we stood around for awhile and took the girls back to their homes in Middletown in the trolley, then returned to the farm, about two miles out of Middletown. The girls must have thought we were either dumb or afraid of the outcome.*

David Reeves hired a colored girl, Milly Hardy, from the South. One evening, she and Fred were alone in the kitchen and she told him he was very hard to get acquainted with. Then,

as Fred puts it, "Milly rolled all over the floor." [Editor's Note: I haven't got a clue whether that's supposed to be a euphemism for something kinky or not. Fred never explained.]

He bought a Columbia bicycle for \$11.00. All the farm hands had bicycles and used them to go to different villages on Sunday afternoons. The Columbia weighed forty-four pounds, however, as opposed to the twenty-six pound weight of most of the other bikes. One Sunday they went to Westtown and on the way back Fred got lost and had to ask directions. It was his first trip and he got cramps in his legs from all that pedaling. Later, in the fall, he bought a second hand Rambler with inner tubes, clincher tires, and 63 gears. To compute the gear, he had to use the diameter in inches of the hind wheel (28") times the front sprockets (18 teeth) and divide by seven teeth in the hind sprocket.

As the summer wore on, Fred became quite attached to Grace McIntosh. He called her "Huckleberry" because once, when Miss Reeves sent him to find out why she hadn't returned, he met her by the berry patch and grabbed her.

*I used to hug her front to front when no one was looking. I was eighteen and never had but one girl I was intimate with. I liked Grace very much but was too shy to ask her my heart's desire and she mostly pushed me away if I got too fresh. She was too strong to be pushed over so I realized nothing doing. As she was the age of marriage she was after a husband and kept herself straight. She expected to get one of the three young men who worked at the farm.*

She had a pet name for him, too, and her girlfriends called him "beautiful teeth" behind his back. Fred and Grace had their picture taken together, but then, on September 11, 1896

*Will Freeman and I went on an excursion to Coney Island. It cost \$1.00 for the round trip. We rode in the chute and landed in a pond below. When we came on the grounds we met two women with bare legs clear up. You can guess what that done to me! We had our picture taken for twenty-five cents with two strange girls.*

They were all in bathing suits. When Grace saw that photo she was offended and that was the end of her friendship with Fred. She wouldn't have anything more to do with Will Freeman, either. Fred kept both the photograph of himself and Grace and the one with the two "pickups."

While he was at the Reeves farm, Fred also corresponded with a girl back home, Lizzie MacKay, but when he returned to Sullivan County he didn't even call on her. He did not really want to return home. He answered an advertisement in the Middletown paper the next spring for a young man to live in and do all work. They had hired someone else the day before, but the man had a brother, a banker, who wanted a boy. He had a fine residence but he wanted a slave, not a servant. Fred would have had to

*get up at four o'clock in the morning, clean up the bank, exercise the pony, wait on his wife, do her dishes and do my own washing. I must not be on the street at night, or see girls. I would get \$10.00 per month and if I stayed until Christmas I would get \$25.00 as a present.*

Instead, Fred hired out to David Reeves at \$15.00 a month for seven months. There he bought a new bicycle, an Arlington, which he rode across the single track railroad to go after the



cows. It cost \$25.00 and when Fred took out an insurance policy with Prudential in 1898, he included the bike on it. It was that same policy, which cost him \$24.33 a year, on which he borrowed money fifteen years later to buy the lot on which he built his house.

Meanwhile, in Liberty Falls, the Gorton boys were scouting around to get the signatures required to change the name of the post office to Ferndale. The change became official on July 5. In Liberty, a power plant was built in 1896 under the supervision of William Sunderland and in 1897 Main Street had electric service under the auspices of Liberty Light and Power Company. It would be several more years, however, before there were electric streetlights.

Fred had a narrow escape while working for David Reeves. He had loaded a 22 rifle, ready to shoot some chipmunks, and left it, already cocked, behind the feed box in the barn. A neighbor boy by the name of Van Norwick came in, found it, and aimed it at him for a joke. Fortunately, it didn't go off.

By the turn of the century, railroads were booming. Not only did trains carry milk and passengers, but also coal. At nineteen, Fred went to work for a few months for Doug Eronymous, Section Boss at Liberty. He earned \$1.05 a day for a ten our day. One day he had his head down, scraping cinders at the Ernhout Switch, when a shout from the brakeman warned him that a boxcar was headed straight at him. If he had been any slower it would have butted him in the head and very likely killed him. He jumped just in time.

In spite of his experience as a section hand, Fred soon returned to the O&W, together with his brother Floyd, to lay down new rails. They were putting in rails thirty feet long and weighing 950 pounds each to replace rails of the same length that only weighted 750 pounds. The twins were part of a gang of seven men supervised by Frank Root. The other five were Italians. They got \$1.20 a day for their work, but it was hard and tempers flared. Once one of the Italians, called Skinny, provoked Fred into telling him to go to Hell. This upset Skinny, who lifted the rail tongs as if to strike him and told him to shut up. "You told me to go to Hell!" he shouted. "You told me to shut up!" Fred yelled back. Before they could come to blows another member of the section gang, Pete, who was a large man, intervened and quieted them down. Recalling the incident in 1963, Fred remarked that "from that time until now I never told anyone to go to Hell. I came very near getting clobbered over the head."

Fred's next job was with Charles Carpenter, another farmer (d. Sept. 13, 1925 @ 67 in Middletown; wife Mary d. Nov. 1, 1961 @ 91). Carpenter put him to work digging a ditch from the spring to his barn so the water would run by gravity through 1½" galvanized pipe some 300' down a hillside.

*I used to swear a lot when at the Reeves farm and at Carpenter's I moved a large flat stone but slipped and the stone caught my first finger and I jerked loose and it took off my nail. I swore bloody murder. Mrs. Carpenter heard me and said she had no idea I was such a profane man. Since then I have taken the name of God very little in vain, as I am ashamed of such language.*

In 1899, Fred went to work at the Hall House, later the Lenape Hotel, in Liberty, for John Hall (d. July, 1937 @ 90). Fred was there three months at \$16.00 a month but got no wages until the end of that time. He did get tips, however, and an all-time high of \$2.00 from a lady who sent him to take her wooden leg to the blacksmith to be repaired. Most of the tips were twenty-

five or fifty cents and some jobs, like carrying trunks up two or three flights of stairs from the wagons that brought them from the depot, brought no tips at all.

While working at the Hall House from 5AM to 7PM every day, Fred took a second job tending bar at the Mansion Hotel that lasted until 2:30 AM. The next day he was so sleepy that when he went to work in the garden he dozed off. Still half asleep, he thought a strange girl came up and talked to him. It could have been a dream, or she could have been one of the city girls he met at the platform dances. He went to Eureka Park on upper Chestnut Street, where it cost five cents a corner to dance and eight couples could be on the floor at a time.

*Mr. Kaye, the manager, would get a partner for you, ask any girl whether a stranger or not to dance, so we had no trouble to get a partner to dance with. We wasn't even introduced. Most were city girls anyway.*

There was a masquerade dance one time where the men wore false faces and the girls old fashioned dresses. Another time there was a cake walk where the prize was a whole cake, complete with candles, which the Killion sisters won.

*A fellow and a girl came on the dance floor and he began picking something off of her dress called the devil's pitchfork or cuckler. Everybody started to laugh. They knew what they must have been up to.*

Fred went out walking with quite a few of the young women who worked at the Hall House (a seven day week for \$4.00). He took Grace Hosier out one night and when he left her at the door next to the Halls' bedroom on the first floor, she kissed him on the lips. Mrs. Hall knew about it and laughed at him.

Other lady friends included Anna Zarick, Christine Muhlig (m Horton Parks who d. Feb. 4, 1945 @ 75), Edna DeBoyce, Clara Kenworthy, Mattie DePuy, and two others whose names he could not afterward recall. One was the girl who peeled potatoes and helped the cook, a big fat Dutch widow who used to give Fred pumpkin jack, what was left over from the pie filling. There were also three girls named Ida—Ida Johnson, Ida Cooley (d. Dec. 1934; m. Floyd Randall), and Ida Kirby. The latter jilted Fred. He had begun to carry a bottle of apple wine about with him and when he offered her some she was convinced he was a toper. She refused to go out walking with him again. Seeing his mistake, Fred threw the nearly full bottle against a stone wall and never indulged in spirits again. [Editor's Note: In spite of this claim, there was one instance when he did. See the diary entry for Sept. 17, 1937.]

It was during this time at the Hall House that Fred rode his bicycle out to a gypsy camp and had his fortune told. The gypsy said that two girls lived very near him. One, with big blue eyes, wouldn't have him. The other, if he married her, would drag him through the dirt. He stayed away from Grace Hosier ("the kissing dame") because of this warning. He was also warned to stay away from gambling because he would lose. He'd had little experience with that. When he was about fourteen, he'd tried for a chance on one of the ten turkeys at a turkey raffle at the blacksmith shop in Liberty Falls. He sold his rematch at dice to Bill Manion, making a profit of forty cents for a ten cent investment, but Manion won the turkey by throwing three aces

and it was worth about a dollar. After the gypsy warning, Fred once won twelve cents in a dice game but he took her seriously and did not indulge again.

The other Gorton brothers were not so temperate. George won a black sheep in the same raffle where Fred lost a turkey. Another time three of the brothers were playing cards at home on a Sunday. When their sister Janette told their father that they shouldn't and he made them stop, they picked up their game and moved to Charles Farquhar's hotel across the Falls Brook from the blacksmith shop to finish. Their mother concluded that nothing had been gained by sending them to a hotel to finish a card game.

When Fred left the Hall House on October 6, 1899, John Hall gave him a letter of recommendation. He then worked for the Ferncliff Hotel for a month, taking the team to draw manure from the livery stables and setting shrubs and doing general handyman work. He drew the line, however, at getting up once he had gone to bed to put away his employer's horse. The man had taken his daughter to the theater and came home late expecting Fred to be at his beck and call. When Fred refused to get up, he was fired.

In the fall of 1899, Fred went to Fallsburgh to visit his Uncle Jim (James B. Misner; Jan. 1, 1822-Dec. 15, 1908) and Aunt Wealthy (Palmer) Misner and to Woodbourne to visit his Uncle Billy Misner (William A. Misner; Feb. 1, 1824-Feb. 1, 1907; m. Mary Loder). Uncle Billy's son Norman took him hunting rabbits and told him to stand where the dog started on the scent because a rabbit would circle in the woods and come right back to where it started from. Sure enough, in about twenty minutes, the rabbit appeared, but as Fred raised his gun to fire, "Norman ran right in range of my fire, laying down his gun, and chased the rabbit into a woodchuck hole. I could have shot the rabbit if Norman had stayed put. I was so mad I swore I would never go hunting again. I kept my word."

In 1900, Fred went to work for Mary Carrier (see Appendix III) on her farm. One day he was sent to Liberty with Old Prince and the buckboard to pick up the new girl and her trunk. Her name was Daisy Steenrod. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, he asked her to go to the singing school the Free Methodists had at Billy Bartholomew's home. He had no faith she would go with him, but she said yes.

*I bought a red letter Testament of them, and we walked back to the Carrier place. I didn't even kiss her goodnight. At that time, Daisy was just another girl. I liked Gertrude Evans quiet well, but one Sunday afternoon she and I were together and Will Bartholomew came into the orchard where Gertie and I were sitting in a hammock and she went to another hammock with Will. Soon Daisy came there. I grabbed her and set her down in the Rabbi Silverstein's hammock and forced her to lie down. In spite of her protest, I slipped her ankle-length dress to her knees and put my leg between them. Later we said we "got crossed."*

When he walked her back to the house he kissed her lips and never courted another girl. They sat in the hammock in the orchard every evening and one time when some of the young people were "jumping around in the hay bay . . . by some freak accident my hand went under her clothes much higher than was proper and I felt bare skin. The old maid, Mary Carrier, said 'she being there' witnessed the affair, and told Daisy it was an insult, and that she should have nothing to do with such a bold young man."

Fred, however, did not apologize. One night when they were in their hammock, two women, Mrs. Wahr and Mrs. Waldren, sneaked up on them to spy, but the hammock was near a stone wall and they gave themselves away by dislodging a stone.

*Daisy was scared so I had to hold her tight and explain that skunks always travel at night. When we got back to the Carrier kitchen in came Mrs. Wahr and Mrs. Waldren and I explained how a skunk had pushed a stone off the wall. The two women's faces were red.*

Fred had two narrow escapes while working for Mary Carrier. She had a foolish boy working for her who helped Fred saw wood and one day he was helping in the barn. When Fred asked him to go up into the hay mow and throw down some straw, however, he refused, saying he would fall down.

*So I went up there myself on a scaffold on one side with boards on it. I stepped on one board and it broke and let me fall to the barn floor on my head. My head felt as if it was cracked open but I lay still to see if Henry would say anything. Pretty soon he said, "I'm glad it wasn't me."*

Later, because it was a very dry season, Fred was sent to draw water from a brook south of the farm.

*I loaded two large barrels on the stone boat and drove down to the brook. I let the team trot down the hill, but the bolt which held the chain to the whiffletree slid out and I saw the whiffletree up in the air. I was still holding the lines, and was jerked in the air as high as the horses' backs. I let loose and landed on my face in the road. My face was so skinned I couldn't shave for a week. The team ran down to the brook and crossed the barbed wire fence where one of them, Thetus, got a foot caught between two wires. I got her out and drove them back to the stone boat and got the two barrels of water.*

When he brought them home, Daisy saw his face and washed it very gently for him. It was then he knew she loved him, but just how much was determined when he decided to put her to a test.

*I stepped in some fresh cow dung and came to the table for dinner. She always sat straight across from me and our feet sometimes touched. I dabbed some of the filth on her shoes and long skirt. To my surprise, she didn't blow up about it. I said to myself, what a good wife she would make. She could make her dresses, trim a hat, cook a meal, and enjoyed the same religion.*

In fact, while working at the Carrier place, they went to Arrat Camp Meeting together.

*We had to change from the railroad and walk quite a distance to the campground. There was a large tent with seats where the service was held. I slept in a tent with eight other men. Our meals cost \$3.50 for the week. A short, stocky woman got up to testify what the Lord had done for her and jumped up and down and hollered "Glory! Glory! Glory!" until she was out of*

*breath. After the evening service all the people would march around the place and sometimes someone would fall because they were overcome with the Spirit and you couldn't feel any pulse for possibly five minutes. Reverend Tamblyn was the preacher. Daisy took a large valise along with much clothing and on the return it got mislaid. Two weeks later it was returned with nothing missing. The Reverend John Cavanew, the one armed rebel, preached part time.*

All through their courtship, Daisy also had a second beau. Every Sunday Ralph Main hired a horse and took her for a drive. He had no idea Fred sat with Daisy in the orchard every night. He found out when the two of them stood up for Jenny Main and George Hutchinson at their wedding and the minister offered to tie the knot for them too. Daisy primly announced that she was engaged to another man.

Daisy Steenrod had not had an easy life before she met Fred. Her father died when she was four, leaving her mother with two boys from her previous marriage, two by Steenrod, and eight Steenrod stepchildren. Fortunately, most were grown, but Daisy's brother Edwin soon became a problem and had to be sent to his Uncle Charles in Wisconsin to be brought up. As for Daisy, she was hired out at the age of ten to a couple who expected her to wash dishes, churn, keep house, and sleep in a garret where rats ran over her at night. When, two weeks later, her mother came for a visit, she learned the facts and took Daisy away with her. Later Daisy went to work at the Meeker Hotel, a boarding house. Her brother came back from Wisconsin and worked there too while their mother lived on the widow's pension she had because her first husband was killed in the Civil War.



*Daisy Cordelia Steenrod*



*Ma Steenrod*

On March 7, 1889, Daisy's mother wrote in her autograph album:

*Let the road be rough and dreary  
And the end far out of sight  
Foot it bravely, strong or weary,  
Trust in God and do the right.*

On June 8, 1895, when she was nineteen, Daisy did the right thing by turning down a marriage proposal from George Brendon, a dairy farmer who told her she would have to milk cows if she married him. She replied that her hands were too small.

What probably strengthened Fred's desire to marry Daisy was his brother George's wedding on October 24, 1900. Fred drove the wedding party to the train using George's horse Pete and a horse borrowed from Clark Gorton. The boys had tied tin cans and old shoes to the hind axle which made such a clatter that George ordered his brother to cut loose the excess baggage. George began keeping house in the cottage originally built for Grace.

Meanwhile, Fred went to work for Clark Gorton, planting apples and thrashing buckwheat and oats. They cradled their own grain in those days using a four fingered cradle with a broad blade and laid it in rows with the grain or heads to one side. This was raked by hand into shieves or bunches for buckwheat and bundles for oats. Fred thrashed many bushels of grain on the barn floor with a flail and cleaned it with a fanning mill turned by hand with a blower to remove the chaff from the grain.

All the time he was at Clark Gorton's, Fred walked to Liberty (about five miles) twice a week to call on Daisy. His cousin had three horses in the barn but Fred was too proud to ask to borrow one, even in winter. On March 24, 1901, he wrote in Daisy's autograph book:

*'Tis hard to part with those we love  
'Tis hard to part, 'tis true.  
But not so hard to part with some  
As it is to part with you.*

He worked, briefly, at the Buckley Hotel, but left Liberty, and indeed the state, to go to Torrington, Connecticut and work for James Bonney (d. May 27, 1940 @ 80) as a carpenter. When the carpentry work ran out, Fred got a job with Charles Kirsch but was laid off. He came home and straight to Daisy. He stayed with his aunt in Liberty until their wedding on June 25.

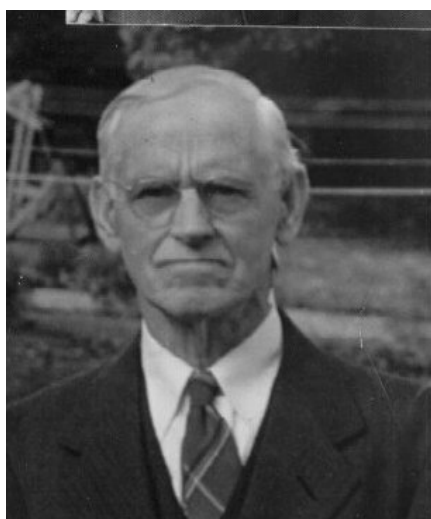
They were married at the Randall home on Orchard Street, where Daisy and her mother lived and where Fred would live for a time after the wedding. [Walter Randall died June 11, 1952 @ 81. He was married to Ellen M. Hall (1871-Oct. 26, 1940)] Mr. and Mrs. Randall were witnesses and when Fred asked Walter Randall to get a box of cigars to celebrate, he also returned with a lot of people, some of whom Fred didn't even know. Some turned out to be Daisy's relatives. In any event, he gave out forty-one cigars. At the wedding itself there had been, in addition to the Randalls, only his mother and father and Daisy's mother. To Fred's relief,

*when the wedding vows were said, "If anybody objects to this union speak now or forever hold your piece," Ma Steenrod kept still.*

# THE LIFE OF A PLODDER FRED GORTON'S 95 YEARS

Part Two

an account compiled from his memoirs and diaries  
by his granddaughter  
Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson



*Fred Gorton in 1948*

## INTRODUCTION AND DISCLAIMER

You are reading Part Two of the memoirs of Fred Gorton, consisting of Chapters Three and Four of THE LIFE OF A PLODDER. Please see separate files for the remaining chapters and APPENDIX I, II, and III.

This pdf file is fully searchable by using the "find" feature and typing in the name or place you are interested in. The font size can also be enlarged for easier reading. The text is being made available in this format so that it may be easily printed or downloaded, but I would appreciate acknowledgment of the source if you choose to reproduce any of the material elsewhere.

The complete LIFE OF A PLODDER contains the following: CHAPTER ONE: THE CHILD, CHAPTER TWO: THE YOUTH, CHAPTER THREE: THE MARRIED MAN, CHAPTER FOUR: THE R.F.D. CARRIER, CHAPTER FIVE: THE COMPANY MAN, CHAPTER SIX: THE SENIOR CITIZEN, APPENDIX I: EXCERPTS FROM DAVID HALL'S DIARY, APPENDIX II: ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY FRED GORTON ON MAY 2, 1963, and APPENDIX III: MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ABOUT PEOPLE FRED GORTON KNEW.

I have tried to select those events in his life and those entries in his diaries which best show the man and his times. I hope he would have been pleased. The original version of this book was made for Fred's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. There were five copies printed in 1980 and then thirty-five more including additional photographs. This new version is revised and expanded, with an attempt made to identify the people Fred Gorton wrote about. Unless I was certain of the correction, I have left the spelling of names as he wrote them. I've also left his spelling for "trashing buckwheat" and the like. Typographical errors are mine. Those involving dates may well have been missed in proofreading, since they wouldn't be caught without checking each one against the original. Please feel free to send corrections to me at [emerson@megalink.net](mailto:emerson@megalink.net).

The opinions expressed in these pages are Fred Gorton's. He was not politically correct by modern standards. Neither was he concerned about libel or slander. He may have been wrong in some of his statements, but he believed he was recording nothing but the truth. I make no apology for him, nor for sharing these records of historical interest with a wider audience. If any of the descendants of those mentioned herein wish to dispute one of my grandfather's comments, I will be happy to add their side of the story to this document and put the revised version on line.

Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson  
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Wilton, Maine  
February, 2005

P.S. To those who have read my novels, in particular *Julia's Mending* and the forthcoming *No Mortal Reason*, some of this material will sound very familiar. For more information on my professional writing, as opposed to this project, which was a personal labor of love, please see my website at [www.kathylynnemerson.com](http://www.kathylynnemerson.com)



## CHAPTER THREE: THE MARRIED MAN

Just before his marriage, Fred boarded with Ann Hall, who rented rooms of Seth Annis (d. March 19, 1938 @ 79) on Clements Street in Liberty. Fred worked for B.F. Crawford, paid \$1.25 for a ten hour day spent building the William Feitner house on Dwyer Avenue. [There were two William Feitners. William Sr. d. Oct. 25, 1936 @ 75; he owned the movie house and was an elder in the church; William Jr. d. Sept. 10, 1961 @ 82) After the wedding, Fred moved into the Randall house with Daisy and her mother, paying \$6 a month for their lodgings at 24 Orchard Street. Daisy worked in Van Fredenberg's Laundry and Fred continued to work as a carpenter. Ma Steenrod, as a condition of the marriage, was to live with them until her death.

During that summer and fall, Fred worked for Crawford, then for Thaddeus Jackson (d. May 24, 1915). Jackson hired him at \$1.75 a day but he later cut the pay back to \$1.50. While working for him, Fred built Lew Bennet's (d. Nov. 9, 1941) house and a large barn on the Abel Gregory place in Upper Frog Hollow. [There were two Abel Gregorys. Abel Sr. (1875-1900) and Abel Jr. (d. Jan. 18, 1919)] Fred also did some work for Ada Moffett (Ada Ernhout Moffett, d. April 22, 1917) on the White Sulphur Springs House. Unfortunately, Jackson was often late with his payroll, and when he ended up owing Fred \$60.00, the young carpenter threatened to quit. Jackson paid off but Fred went to work for James Dice anyway.

James Dice built a cottage for Charles Syreen with two bay windows. Fred lathed some of the rooms and carried hod for Fred Sebold to lay the chimney. A relative of Mr. Dice's, Fred Bailey, came to work after the subfloor was laid over the cellar. Dice left Bailey in charge to put up one side of the 2x4s. They were using shipslap for stays, but Bailey didn't know to spike 2x4s for the corners or how to stay them, so the crew did all the work. They had two sides up and stayed when Dice returned and told Bailey "he done a fine job." [Editor's Note: elsewhere Fred says a James D. Bailey (d. Jan. 17, 1958 @ 68) sold sand and used to work for James Dice.]

One day Dice asked Fred if he could butcher a veal calf. For butchering and skinning the calf, Fred earned a four or five pound piece of veal.

Archie Dice [Archie G. Dice (July 14, 1890-Feb. 27, 1954) married Daisy May Stanton (July 9, 1893-April 30, 1961) on April 26, 1916] was in charge of building a cottage next to the later site of WVOS. It was very cold by then, only ten degrees above zero, but Fred showed up for work as usual and shingled the front porch in that weather. That was the end of the building season for the year, however.

In 1902, Fred saw his first automobile go by. He heard it first, when it was nearly a half mile away. Gould Barlow [d. 1914; m. Jennie Messiter (d. March 21, 1917); worked for Young, Messiter and Dodge) was the first Liberty man to own a power auto. It was two feet high and eight or nine feet long and had no back up lever. To turn it around, he lifted the back end up and swung it the opposite way. Barlow took Gill Gorton to Cold Spring and home again in this peculiar machine.

*Dr. Whitcomb (Dr. H. C. L. Whitcomb, who died before 1916) bought a car called a steamer. He had his office in the Solomon Royce home. In 1902 there were very few autos. There were dirt roads and when a horse met an auto it was so scared it would rear up and give a jump to get by.*

In November of 1902, Fred and Daisy rented the James Gray farm in Ferndale—forty

acres, a horse, two cows, and a few starved chickens. Fred paid the taxes and agreed that the Gray family could spend three months of every year there and have the use of the horse, Old Nell, to do their shopping when convenient. James Gray (d. c. 1937 @ 78) was a printer in Brooklyn, where he had a thriving business, but he sold out to study law. After he passed the bar he was flat broke and had six children to support. The farm was run down, Fred was not permitted to cut wood on the land, half the hay had been sold to Billy Bartholomew, and one year Mrs. Gray stayed on almost all of one year, crowding the Gortons into three rooms. This was Rose Gould Gray, who d. Nov. 8, 1947 @ 80. "The last survivor of the Grays" was daughter Rose Gray, who died Aug. 26, 1966.

In spite of all these annoyances, Fred did all right for himself while the family lived on the Gray farm. He fattened the horse, made the place into a working farm, and did odd jobs.

*In the year 1902, two brothers, Frank and Fred Webster (see Appendix III), and Chauncey Rowe, their uncle, started building a turning mill in Ferndale near Gregorys' boarding house. The dam on the West Mongaup was only four feet high but there was plenty of water before the boarding season to turn out souvenirs to sell to the city people. One job they let out and I got the contract to make little chairs seven inches high of rustic yellow pine. I made them for six cents each in the form of an arm chair, using twenty-seven pieces. I drove the beads and Daisy put them together in the evenings. I cut the little sticks at Websters' turning mill. I went to Black Lake to get the yellow pine boughs. William Bert gave the trees to me free as the Mongaup Falls Power Plant was to flood the land up to his place the next season. I started out at five o'clock one morning and returned home about sundown.*

*I decided to also make easels to hold pictures. The yellow pine has burs on it and I used them both above and below the picture with a strip of white birch at the top with "Liberty, NY" written on it in red paint. I did the lettering too. I could make three in an evening and sold them for twenty-five cents each. I also learned to nail on a bur to look like it grew there.*

*I made match boxes in the shape of a log cabin. James Goodsir (1858-1923; married Mary Edmons, who d. 1938 @ 81) took twenty-five at twenty-five cents each on my promise I would sell to no one else in Liberty. I made fifty large chairs, thirteen inches high, at twenty-five cents each for the Hope Souvenir Shop in Hurleyville. At one time I had \$75 worth of souvenirs on the bed upstairs. The next year I made the same chairs, seven inches high, with white birch, heart shaped, with "Liberty, NY" printed in red at the top of the chair.*

*All this time I worked the Gray farm and cut all my wood for fuel from part of the Gorton farm across the Mongaup. I snaked it up to the Gregory Road and drew it home in big chunks and sawed it into stove lengths when I got home. I left the horses, Kit and Old Nell, at the Henry Bohlen place while I cut the trees down. Fifteen hours a day was nothing for me to work.*

*The souvenir business run out and I raised calves and made butter. I took 1<sup>st</sup> premium on my ten pound pail of butter at the Monticello County Fair. I also entered three Jersey cows, one Jersey calf, and one belted calf and took 1<sup>st</sup> premium on the Jersey calf. Each premium carried a prize of \$3.00. The three cows standing in stansions were nearly dried up eating hay furnished by the*

*Fair Association. I sold the two calves for \$10.00 and sold the butter to Ben Gerow for twenty cents a pound. I made butter that summer on the Gray place. The largest output for one week was forty-nine pounds. I also peddled buttermilk in Liberty Village at 2½ cents a quart. I also bought 300 pounds of onions and peddled them at fifty cents for a half bushel. I plowed gardens that summer for fifty cents and seventy-five cents per garden and let out Old Nell for a lady to ride at \$1.50 for one afternoon. I drew rhododendron with my team for George Taylor (December 12, 1854-May 16, 1933). They were dug up roots and dirt intact and shipped to different parks in and around New York and Long Island.*

George Taylor was a meat peddler, who married five times. His third wife was Fred's sister, Janette. The others were Sarah Ann Farquhar, Helen Davis (Mrs. Jake Tompkins), Jennie Benedict, and Sally Knapburg. Janette married George when he was fifty and she was thirty-eight. Eight months later she had a miscarriage with pneumonia and died March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1910 at the age of thirty-nine years and five months.

*I took a contract to furnish ice for the DeBoyce Brothers at Strongtown Creamery at 2½ cents for a cake of ice 18x24 and a foot thick. Ma Steenrod was living with us and objected to me taking the big ice house to fill. I hired two other teams, Bruce Frazier's and DeBoyce Brothers', at \$2.50 per eight hour day and bought the ice in a little pond next to the creamery from Mrs. Wickes for \$5.00. I got ice from my father's pond, which was much larger, to finish the job. DeBoyce used a power contraption to hoist the cakes of ice off our sleighs. I received an \$107.00 contract but they only paid me \$95.00 as the ice was thicker and didn't take as much as we expected.*

*I also filled Charles Hosie's (Frendale postmaster) ice house from Manion's pond with George Hutchinson and John Gray and I filled Frank Carr's for \$7.00 and Ed Baker's for \$7.00 the same winter. Charles Crispell bought ice from me at one cent a cake and demanded we should furnish two men to lift it on his sleighs. When I found out, I offered one man to help lift it. He quit. Father wanted me to put some ice in his ice house, which I did at my own expense.*

It was sometime in 1903 when Fred had a conversation with Reverend Seward about dreams. He asked the Free Methodist preacher if he could interpret them, for Fred had dreamed that he had been lying under a hemlock tree asleep when a large turkey buzzard with a six foot wing spread hovered over him. He raised his head and it flew away. Rev. Seward wouldn't tell Fred the meaning of this dream until he promised not to take offense at it. Then he explained that a turkey buzzard is never after anything but a dead carcass. His advice to Fred was to stay alive.

Once, while living at the Gray place, Fred did nearly lose his life. He and James Gray Jr. were out with Old Nell. They had just passed a straw load carrying a number of children whose legs were hanging outside the rigging; suddenly they saw a runaway horse coming at them, two wagon wheels up in the air. Fred told James to drive into the field for safety while he ran out to save the children. He ran alongside the strange horse, missed the bridle but caught one line back of the turrets and fell under the horse. He could feel the horse's hind legs kicking him as he hung onto the line. When the horse fell, Fred came out on the other side, barely saving himself from being crushed. He unhooked the horse, righted the wagon, and was waiting with it when the

owner came along and took over. James called him a hero. Daisy said he was a fool. He had a bump on his head the size of half an egg.

One year in the Coaching Parade in Liberty, Fred rode Kit and let Mrs. Ben Hasbrouck ride sidesaddle on Old Nell:

*I represented Rip Van Winkle. I was dressed in an old scarecrow suit I borrowed from a neighbor and for whiskers I shredded a piece of rope 1½ " thick and 12" long. I used some red dye on my cheeks, which was hard to remove. The prize was worth fifty cents. The judges was a man and a young woman. The young woman was offered a good steak supper at the new Liberty Hotel if she would give the prize to someone not an equestrian, so I lost out. A coaching parade was largely attended each summer for many years. One time, perhaps 1907, the Bengel family were blacked up like niggers eating watermelons on a hay ride. All four girls were in it.*

In 1904 the Gorton family expanded to include a son, Edwin Leslie.



*Daisy, Leslie at two months seven days,  
George Clark at two months one day,  
Ophelia Clark*

Ma Steenrod still lived with them and not one of her other nine children and step-children contributed a cent to her support.

*She applied for a Widow's Pension from service of her first husband. She married Steenrod six years after James Bonney died at the Battle of Fair Oaks. She received \$105.00 as back pay from the time she applied until the next payment due of \$12.00 a month until she died. Ma Steenrod gave me \$25.00 to buy a Jersey cow of Bill Ryder. The next year I bought Blossom, a mulley cow three years old, and she had a heifer calf every year until I had the auction and sold out all six cows and the wagon canopy top (for \$6.00). No one bid on Kit the horse, so I bought Sookie from Charles Crispell's auction for \$26.00 and drove team all winter. In the next spring I sold Sookie for \$25.00 and Kit for \$60.00.*

After the auction they moved to Mary Carrier's farm for the winter. Alice May Gorton was born there on November 13, 1905. She was a pretty baby except for a hair lip, which Ma

Steenrod blamed on an incident which took place while Daisy was pregnant. Fred had brought a pig into the house to doctor a bite on its back. As he made stitches and drew the string together, Daisy saw what he was doing and yelled and put her finger to her mouth. Her mother said that marked the child she was carrying. Daisy did feel a sore spot within until Alice was born.

The last two weeks of her life, Ma Steenrod had to have Sophia Strasser as a live-in nurse. One night Fred went to call Sophia to wait on his mother-in-law and had a hard time waking her. He was reprimanded for staying too long in her bedroom. Cordelia Steenrod died on March 16, 1906. At the funeral her son, Sam Bonney (Samuel J. Bonney, d. June 29, 1930 @ 75; married to Avis Benson, who d. Jan. 29, 1943 @ 90), contributed \$10.00, her son Jim Bonney gave \$20.00, and Levi Steenrod (see Appendix III under Roy Steenrod), a step-son, added \$15.00. The undertaker charged \$65.00 and the pension money only paid the doctor bills. Over sixty years later, Fred was still bitter about the matter, since all three of her sons—Sam, Jim, and Ed Steenrod—had gotten "rewards" at the time of the retroactive pension payment.

The doctor told Fred and Daisy that one year was a safe time to operate on Alice's lip, but she was so healthy at five months that they took her to a Methodist free clinic in New York then. The surgeons cut her gums and drew the front together and left only a little 1/8" deep V in her upper lip. Tragically, Alice caught whooping cough at the hospital and at seven months and one day old died of convulsions. Fred remembered that she waved her hands from side to side thirty-eight times, but the doctor believed she died in no pain.

The undertaker used a two-seated surrey and put the little casket on the back seat. Fred and Daisy spent \$105.00 to bury their daughter, \$18.00 for expenses and the remainder for four corner posts to mark the plot in the Old Cemetery in Liberty.

In the spring of 1906, the Gortons moved to Bill Gerow's (William J. Gerow, who d. July 4, 1907; his wife Amelia d. June 14, 1924) house at 368 South Main Street and Fred went to work for Sherman Ernhout (see Appendix III). Sherman sold lumber and coal and feed. He had an engine to grind corn and used a buzz saw to chop up refuse lumber and old ties into kindling. Fred's job had many facets. He mixed feed, split kindling, which was delivered for twenty-five cents a barrel, shoveled coal up to the chute when it got low in the large bin, and emptied the spittoon. He got \$30.00 a month for ten hour days but at Christmas he got a barrel of flour as a bonus. He quit that job to do more carpenter work and worked for Gurnsey Rampe on the George Stoddard (married Fanny R. Steenrod, who d. May, 1924) cottage. Rampe was pleased with Fred's work and told him that a man who could whistle or sing while at work was the kind of man to have. Fred also carried hod for the Stoddard job but Stoddard and Will Clark (see Appendix III) trimmed the house. In the winters Fred did any job he could get, even taking up carpet for a woman to clean it and then putting it back down. He also lathed the Jim Cusator house for O. P. Davis. Osmer P. Davis d. Aug. 20, 1934, his wife Caroline on June 17, 1947 @ 79. Davis was a butcher, storekeeper, and hardware merchant.

On October 21, 1906, Fred revisited his childhood home and was moved, upon his return, to write a lengthy account of his journey. This "essay" is quoted below without corrections to Fred's spelling or punctuation. Any other discrepancies are due to the editor's failure to correctly interpret Fred's handwriting.

*Essay October 21, 1906. Liberty, N.Y.*

*I started from Mountain View Farm southward once more to make Old Hickory a visit. I crossed two iron bridges, went up a hill the road being covered with leaves, passed Simon Kahn's a retired butcher who had a wagon in his front yard with the inscription "for sale" on it, still I journeyed through Ferndale, had a chat with Frank Webster, crossed the arch bridge and next I met Chas. Hosie coming down from the depot with his daughter in the wagon with one yoke broken. I passed the butcher shop met a little dog which acted very friendly, he put his fore paws against me which got my Sunday pants quite dirty following close behind came a tall lady asking where the station agent could be found, I quickly pointed with my umbrella to a house just below the bank, here I turned my back, passed some box cars which stood on the track and walked down the track, the next object met my gaze was a rat which crossed the track before me, and run under the mail bag catcher on I went toward Bulls Cut, kicking up suitable washers and nuts that may come to use on the farm presently I heard a freight train coming at a great rate of speed. I stepped aside so it could pass, next I passed after I got through the cut was the signal block which had dropped down, then I came to Frazier's crossing where those potatoes are said to be so large as to stick out of the hills on one side, to my surprise such rows were already dug, the remaining rows were free from weeds, thanks to Mr. Frasier for his example in the care of potatoes. I walked on soon found myself in an unmown meadow one I mowed last season whistling and singing between the clatter of the old Buckey(?) machine, here I change my course directly west for the hemlocks which stand too thick to ever make heavy timber, as I am nearing the Mongaup River I see eight fine hemlock trees large enough for nice timber standing on Old Hickory Farm too! here I inscribe my name on a large beech tree "F.G. 10,06"(meaning Fred Gorton October 1906). I went to the water's edge, there I saw a barrel without any head yet it hadn't lost its hooped skirts, then and there I disputed the northern line was two rods too far toward the south with a light heart I scrambled up the rivers bank until I reached the path, where the "Gorton boys" used to tread when going in swimming, next I went down a steep rock to a cave below where we boys used to take corn and roast it, this cave is said to be a place where a crazy man stayed and lived forty days and nights, read the Bible through in that time and was cured when I was a boy in knee breeches I saw the corn cobs down the bank from the cave, I walked on counting hemlock trees until I came out into an open space there I saw a partridge after passing the old chestnut tree, on and on I went through the laurel bushes until I came to the South West corner of Old Hickory my first knowledge of ever being there, now I had counted fifty trees that would make nice logs to take to the sawmill hemlock lumber being worth twenty two to twenty four dollars per thousand feet. presently I heard the crack of a gun thundering down through the woods soon a hunter passed in sight of me with his coat sticking out as though it were full of some kind of game. I watched him until he went out of sight then I changed my course eastward toward those hickory trees one of which I used to call mine just north of the old black cherry tree, I passed sixteen cords of wood piled in four ranks just outside the woods next through the nine acre lot and so on through the Storey-lonesome (?) lot where my father used to keep the old black sow while in suspense waiting to find a litter of pigs, the hog pen was in order the swill barrel was there also the hog troth even the outside door was buttoned shut, I passed between the wind-mill and the birch lot saw a man with a hunters coat coming through the meadow, perhaps to help carry the game home of his friend I met in the woods, I now climb over the wall into the lot called Italy where a family of Italians lived in a barn while the Strongtown trussel was being filled. I well remember "Big Mike" the steam shovel and the*

*little steam engine No. 34 called Little Annie with those little self dump cars and how the Irishman cured me of the hiccoughs a little baby girl was born there, Dr. Payne brought it from Liberty in his medical case. I left Italy and went down the hill filled in with stones and was surprised to find a new pasture-gate crotched on the little end, I struck the road went to the barn found my spring tooth harrow, saw the two pigs I sold last spring to Millard Carr, instead of being little pigs twenty pounds each I found they weighed ten times as much, he had them in the pen where father kept the black steers, I went out of the barn, but had no sooner left when Millard came to feed those nice porkers of course I turned on my heal had a chat with him, bragged up the pigs a little, passed the old ice house, went in the other barn went up the long ladder into the hay loft saw the Gardner "hay fork." I went back down the ladder on the barn floor where the hay wagon stood the mowing machine and roler (?) wine (?) there, out I went down the road in search of hickory nuts I found one for a souvenir Then I went down in the little orchard but found no apples there, I saw three trees in the lower meadow one of them had apples on, so I took my umbrella and knocked one off the tree picked two from the ground eating one as I went over the well into the land of Sodom here I passed a pond where I spent three weeks hard labor the old boat half full of water it looked tattered and torn the chute belonging to Debois Bros laid out on the bank waiting for next ice season I went across the dam found it leaked a little near the top, down below the pond runs a little stream of water which I crossed with some difficulty into the land of Gomorrah here I saw another partridge, and plucked a bunch of winter-greens. I ate some leaves but went back to my apple eating again as I was standing in the winter green leaves I saw near by a dead-fall used to trap rabbits I now cross the line from Old Hickory into the Linden Farm the first thing in crossing the swamp was to get one foot wet, I journeyed on until I came to the path that leads to the sapbush (?) until I come to the old hemlock close to the path, I count that No. 1 and start west to the sap-bush counting ten big hemlocks on my way, arriving at the sap house I go in see two brick furnaces, a lot of sap buckets, and the spiles and sap-pan. Also a pile of dry wood inside ready for next spring. I pass between the Linden house and barn strike the Strongtown road again Howard Smith just passed by before I struck the road, along comes Archie Comfort he is going to walk to the creamery with me, I've just arrived at the creamery, Archie went down the track Hallo Phil. how are you? hallo to young Waterbury also, in comes young Ostram with a news paper for me to read I read it carefully while he went up to the little station it was a column about himself and Fred Harris's courtship at the Loomis Saniterarium (sic), I was about to go home when he come back and said, what do you think of that? I said "outrageous" Ostram thinks he will push the editor's face, at that I came home without any further adventure worthy of mention.*

There are two Ostrams in Fred's notes. Elmer (d. Feb. 20, 1959 @ 75) was a restaurant owner. Shell (d. Dec. 5, 1915) was a tin peddler. According to Fred, Shell Ostram's daughter Grace taught at Huntington School, turned summersaults, and had twin daughters by March 1916.

Fred signed these eight pages "Fred S Gorton Oct. 21, 1906" and on sixteen later occasions also signed his name there with the date. The last is May 5, 1970. Fred added the initial S after his name (just S, not S.) to distinguish himself from Fred B. Gorton, a distant cousin, who also lived in Liberty. Fred implies the S stood for nothing in particular and says it was preferable to altering his first name to Alfred or Frederick. I have a sneaking suspicion,

however, that it stood for his old nickname—Fred "Scorcher" Gorton.

Fred's second son, Chester Frederick Gorton, was born October 24, 1907 but lived less than ten months before succumbing to a fever. During most of Chester's short life his father was out of a job. He also had another of those narrow escapes from death:

*I was not employed but lived at 368 S. Main St. I went down the railroad tracks to Father's farm to cut wood and at Ferndale I started to go through Bull's Cut. I got about 300' in and heard train #9's whistle going north. Both sides of the cut was covered with ice. I ran back for my life the 300' and dodged in an open space big enough to stand in as the train went by. My wife warned me not to go on the railroad track, but I didn't listen. Only speed saved me.*

One way he could earn money was by skinning horses. He already had experience in this trade:

*James Gray had a horse which was lame when I rented his farm in 1902 and not much hay on the farm after Billy Bartholomew took half on shares. Gray gave me the horse to skin and use for chicken feed. One day six months later a man brought a dead horse on a stone boat for me to skin. Mary Carrier had me kill the old mare which raised colts, the mother of Thetus. I skinned her for the hide. In 1908, a short time before I took the RFD job (March 2), Mary Carrier gave me Thetus to skin. I got up at 4AM and walked over there (later the site of the Empire Hotel) with a lantern and a large knife and a 38 center fire revolver. I took Thetus out of her stall and on the barn floor gave her a bit of hay and as she reached for it I shot her in the temple. She fell and never moved. I skinned her and quartered the carcass, pushed the innards in the barnyard, sold the hide for \$2.50. Mary's father, Albert Carrier, remarked "what a shame" as he raised her from a filly and felt bad about it. I shot a horse on the Cooper farm for them. They didn't have the heart to kill it.*

In 1909, Fred started keeping account books. The first volume runs from January 1 of that year until March 1913. On April 4, 1910, his son William Russell was born. That is not recorded in the accounts (it is, however, in the family Bible) but there are the following entries for May 7:

Leslie play suit, hat, suspenders	\$1.35
stockings, dress good for Leslie	\$1.82
pie dish, 15 peanuts	\$ .20
Russell's carriage	\$6.00

In the back of the book, Fred wrote addresses. His father was in Jacksonville, Florida. His brothers were scattered—Osmer in South Carolina, Floyd and Leslie in Middletown, Ai in Walton, Osmer a second time in Poughkeepsie, Cecil in Chicago, where Daisy's brother Ed was also living. Grace was living in Hurleyville with her husband, Charles Farquhar, the Hurleyville constable. I'm not sure where George was at this time. He apparently did not want the farm.

Gill Gorton had bought W. M. Kilbourne's house at 9 Maple Street, later the site of the Telephone Company office in Liberty. He had first rented Old Hickory Farm, and then sold it, in



October 1908, for \$9,600.00 to a Mr. Waddler. Under Waddler's ownership the barn and Linden Cottage burned down, no hay was cut, the meadows filled with trees, and a rooming house and three little cottages were built for summer people. These were still in operation in the 1960s.

Fred and Daisy and their children moved to the Piney Woods Inn, owned by James I Gulnac of Canada, on February 1, 1911. Later it would be known as the Belmont.

*The weather was zero most of the time. We used to sit next to the kitchen stove and Mama took Russell on her lap to keep warm. Leslie was sick with pneumonia. His mother let him play in the water tub next to the barn. Then she got sick and spit green. I employed a nurse for her, Helen Seifert. About that time Arch Armstrong lost his first wife, Mollie Whitaker, and married her nurse, Jennie Grant. One day Helen opened all the windows so Daisy would get pneumonia. Then she asked me if Daisy should die what would I do. I told her I didn't know, but in my mind I said, "I'd be damned if I'd marry you!" She had already told me Leslie was nasty but Russell was a nice boy. That cooked her goose.*

Daisy, and Leslie, recovered, and with the future made more secure by Fred's job as a RFD carrier, they began to look for a place to build a house of their own. The Asa Carrier place belonged to a friend, Will Clark. It was a lot 75x300' and 130' 10" wide to the extreme southeast corner. Will and Ophelia Clark were willing to sell it for \$300.00. Fred borrowed \$252.00 on his \$1000.00 Prudential Insurance policy, which he had taken out in 1898, and another \$120.00 from Frank and Sarah Webster. E. L. Cooper then built a 20x24' barn on the lot where the family lived for the next thirteen months. On April 1, 1912, there are these entries in the account book:

Pd balance for lot	\$150.00
Dubin (Dobbin) 4 new shoes	\$ 1.25
sausage	\$ .30
2 front clips on wagon	\$ .20

*We lived in our new barn to save paying rent while I was building our first house. I was putting the children to bed, my wife was out in the back yard, and along came Ralph Main, a former beau, to call on us. I could hear them talking but didn't go down until the children were asleep. He told her how disappointed he was to have married the woman he boarded with who was twenty years older than he was and had colored her hair jet black and was too old to have children, and how sorry he was to have lost Daisy. She shot right back, "You never asked me to be your wife. Anyway, you are five years younger than I. I love my husband and wouldn't trade him for any man, even though he was very rich." Ralph soon went back to the Pinney House, after having a chat with me. Ralph played around with the girls at E. E. Pinney's all summer. He told me the girls at E.E. Pinney's would stand naked before the upper windows in the evenings with the lights on. Ralph suggested I come up some night and see for myself. They had about twenty girls boarding there. I didn't go. I attended his funeral with my wife and Mrs. Ralph Main was very anxious to see Ralph's first love. He died April 29, 1932 at fifty.*

The house at 100 Carrier Street went up slowly, with Fred doing much of the work

himself, running the risk of injury. At one point during construction he got a sliver in the third finger of his right hand that showed up past the nail.

*I took a three-corned file and separated the nail and Clem Zeiss took my razor and slit the inner skin. Then I squeezed the finger and Clem picked it out. We didn't call a doctor either. (Clement Zeiss married Daisy May Mansfield on April 14, 1928 in Ellenville.)*

*E. L. Cooper was the contractor at \$2.50 per day and the two others got \$1.50 per day of ten hours. They put up the sills (4x8' wide) and studding and plate and I sheeted it up to the plate. At this time the June 13, 1913 fire in Liberty took Charles Morton's livery stable and licked right into B.F. Green's store and north to Dr. Charles Payne's residence where there was an open space. Also the Baptist Church burned, the only building on the south side of Main Street to burn. Then the men came back and laid the floor beams and the garret floor and framed the rafters and put them up. Floyd and I sheeted the roof using one inch boards which I got from a hen house on Lake Street for \$18.00. The garret floor was made of matched six inch flooring from the same hen house and there were also four windows used in the cellar.*

*I was the rural letter carrier from Liberty (working from 10:30 to 4:30) and used my horse to draw all the stone for the foundations and dug half the cellar using stone in the cement to save cement and sand. Mike Beseth and two sons poured the foundation at \$1.50 per day each, using wheelbarrows to carry the dirt out front. We used eighty-six bags of cement which cost ninety cents a bag. E. L. Cooper made the forms for the masons. This was 24x28. Then Cooper's carpenters came again and laid eleven rows of shingles all around the four sides. Then Floyd and I finished shingling the roof. George Stoddard built the chimney in one day for \$2.50. I carried hod and mixed the cement. George Stoddard and Ben Hasbrouck plastered the rooms on the first floor and one room above the kitchen. I trimmed the first floor. I also laid all the flooring and lathed the entire house. The carpenters came again and put on the three outside doors, made the porch, but I laid the porch floor. The carpenters also built my back porch and lavatory, and added a bay window not included in the house plans. We had no door upstairs except the bathroom door.*

*We moved in from the barn September 4, 1913. My brother Leslie and his wife Hazel at our first meal together in our new home.*

*I had William Sunderland (d. May 27, 1933 @ 73; wife Mary d. 1959 @ 97; Chief Engineer at the Power Plant; lived on Lincoln Place) install the knob and tube wires, cost \$17.00, and I tapped a lead wire on and lathed the remainder of the upstairs by a twenty-five watt bulb. Some years later on the RFD vacation time Joe Delmarter (d. Nov. 2, 1951 @ 80; m. Violet Bell, who d. April 13, 1949 @ 72) plastered the upstairs one coat troweled down. I carried hod right over the back porch through the window to him. I paid him \$18.00 for six days' work. I trimmed the upstairs rooms except the garret room which E. L. Cooper trimmed free as Daisy helped care for his mother as she was sick at that time.*

*George Messler (d. Sept. 24, 1949 @ 81) put on tar paper and mackerel bone shell wire for the*



*stucco 11 ½ ' up to the green shingles, 4 ½ ' down from the cornice. Messler's bill was \$45.00, time and material. I hung four doors.*

*The well on the Gulnac Place I was using run dry and I drew water from Lake Ophelia in two fifty gallon barrels with Roxy and my light lumber wagon.*



*Our neighbor, George Cowell (d. Nov. 10, 1931 @ 60; m.*

*Etta Morris, b. Aug. 17, 1876; d. Feb. 7, 1959), helped move the stove and heavy furniture and acted like a real neighbor, but later plowed so near my driveway the stones fell into his garden. So I stretched a line from his front iron stake to his back line, which was 140' from the center of the road, and found out I could take 16" more than I formerly used, which I did, laying up a wall. He worked on the O&W Railroad and each night when he came home from work would squint from one iron post to the other. I came out to meet him and said to him, "I have stretched a wire from post to post and will bring my driveway out to the wire." He was mad, and didn't speak to me for a year or more. If I spoke to him he would just grunt. Later he got three geese and fenced them next to the driveway to make a stink and force Mrs. Martha Hill (Mary Martha Hill who d. April 1934; wife of Rufus Hill who d. Sept. 2, 1944 @ 80) to dispense of her septic tank and hook on the sewer, as Mrs. Hill had a house in the lot back of the George Cowell residence. The scheme worked. He tried to get me to swear the stink came from the septic tank. I refused.*

Having created a home for his family, Fred began to consider a career move. On October 17, 1917, after serving his six hours on the twenty-seven mile RFD route, he started work as a fireman at the Liberty Power House. His adventures as a rural mail carrier and those in the power plant rate separate chapters in this account but one more event of importance must be considered here. In 1914, Fred began to keep a diary in addition to an account book. The first volume runs to 1920, but most of the entries fall in the years 1915 to 1917. He noted deaths, births, marriages, and the progress of crops. He also filled the 160 page composition book with details of his family life. It would be impossible to quote all the entries, but the most revealing are reproduced here:

- September 6, 1914 I called on George [his brother] between Sunday School and Church. He was having gall stones. Martha had just got home from her Father's who was ill from a stroke. Floyd spent the evening with us. Went home at 8:30.
- September 10, 1914 Russell and myself went to Grace's and Charley Farquhar's. 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their wedding. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. N. G. Gorton, Ai Gorton, George Gorton and Martha, Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Benedict (Charles Benedict d. Aug. 30, 1925 @ 57, shot by George Raymond at his home by his own gun), Charles Taylor (d. Sept.20, 1944 @ 50; accidentally shot in barn), Matt Raymond's first wife (the cook), Grandma Farquhar (Mrs. James Farquhar who d. Dec. 22, 1915), Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Farquhar, Edna, Earl, Lucille, Alice, Leonard (Grace's five children), also Mrs. Andrew Farquhar. Met Charity Ernhout on Scoot on our return home. She was bound for Stevensville. [The train called the Scoot used to leave Liberty O&W at about 7:45 AM.]
- September 20, 1914 Took Roxy (the horse), and Leslie and Russell and went to Ferndale through by Cooleys' back past Pine Grove Hotel today.
- September 21, 1914 Made drive-way next to Atkins line. [Amenzo Atkins (d. July 4, 1962 @ 78 m. Minnie Morris (d. July 17, 1971 @ 85)]
- September 27, 1914 Daisy fell out of wagon in front of Church. Bruised right arm. Skinned left knee.
- October 10, 1914 Atkins house all sheeted and half of the roof sheeted for shingles.
- October 17, 1914 Less [E.L.]Cooper trimmed garret door and hung both garret and pantry door today.
- October 29, 1914 Got N.G. Gorton six hens of Jim Demerest (\$3.30). Daisy and Russell went to Hutchinsons today.
- November 26, 1914 We all spent Thanksgiving with Father and Mother.
- December 6, 1914 Leslie, Russell & myself went calling on Coopers this afternoon (Sunday.)
- December 14, 1914 I began running the sleigh again. I drove Kit and arrived back again to the P.O. at 3:35.
- January 1, 1915 Father and Mother were here for supper. We had spare ribs and crullers.
- February 21, 1915 Myself and family went to J. W. Brown to take dinner. Geo. Ackerly & wife were there also Joe Brown, Geo Ackerly, Fred S Gorton went over to

the Liberty Park Preserve. We saw Chancy I. Smith in his one room "log cabin." He showed us a fish pole which some trespasser left, also the dagger which Mrs. Taylor murdered her husband and afterward cut him up and burned him in the cook stove, also a picture the title "a September Morn." He had a type writer a banjo, revolver, couch and chairs, gas lamp, center table and even rugs on the floor, a stuffed bird ten years old when it died and some kind of stuffed bird two feet high, a nice little sink, a hanging bird's nest, an army sword, also a common sword, the picture of his little spotted pony all framed. Wilbur Roosa was there in the cabin with us also. We then went to the big house and saw fish eggs and a few little trout just hatched with the feeding bag with 60 day rations with them. J. G. Smith said the eggs which he hatched would be 95% good where the trout only hatch 5%. [George Ackerly (July 15, 1881-May 26, 1940) was a police officer and a guard at the old bank; he married 1) Latta Porter (d. Aug. 22, 1936) and 2) Mrs. Myrtle Miller.]

- February 22, 1915 Leslie, Russell & myself went to Fulton's Creamery to get skim milk. 2:45 is the time it took.
- March 7, 1915 All of us went down to 368 S. Main for hen dinner at Mrs. Amelia Gerow's.
- March 27, 1915 Ralph Main called and took supper.
- June 15, 1915 I met Grace and Chas. Farquhar with their automobile just past Glen Porter's bridge today on the regular trip. Earl was with them.
- June 28, 1915 Leslie went to T. L. Maltby's to spend a week. Afishing he caught three trout, 1 catfish, pickerel. We were very lonesome. It seemed like a death in the family to have him gone.[Theodore Maltby d. March 9, 1955 @ 74. He married Nellie Ray (d. 1918). He was a farmer at Hurd, NY and had a daughter Retta and a son Harold.]
- July 23, 1915 Mrs. Daisy Gorton, Leslie & Russell started for Cortland. Fred stayed home & kept house for 2 weeks.
- July 24, 1915 I took dinner with Father and Mother today.
- August 5, 1915 I rode home for the first time an old auto Ford belonging to Ben Gerow. Walter Gerow went along.
- August 9, 1915 I made all my RFD trip in my new automobile No. V8284. Nothing happened. Mr. Messler Jr. went with me to teach me how to drive. We started at 11 o'clock and got back at 4:25 then at 5:15 I drove the car down

to Ben Gerow's place, backed up, and went home on Carrier Street by way of Hotel Reed. When I entered my driveway I ran the wheel on the bank a little. A thunder storm came up and the car got a good ducking.

- August 16, 1915 I took Daisy, and the children to Websters and to Strongtown School house and returned for their first auto trip.
- August 22, 1915 We all went for an automobile ride. Took Less Cooper along to Monticello. It took 45 minutes to come back as far as the railroad.
- September 5, 1915 My family, Osmer & Grace went to Wm T. Ratcliff's in the afternoon by way of the Workmen's Circle Sanatarium. We got there at 3 o'clock. Then I had to go after Father and Mother at White Sulphur Springs House with the automobile. We got back about 8 o'clock.
- September 10, 1915 We took the automobile and went to Stevensville Lake and took Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Cowell with us. A fishing this evening Russell caught three fish. One was a sun fish. 17 were caught in all. We got back at 10:20.
- September 12, 1915 I took six boys of the Sunday School Leslie included to Monticello. We went through the Court House and Prison. I gave one of the prisoners some matches. (Edwin Young was one of the boys. The sheriff excorted us past all the prison cells. I think Buck Winner was sheriff in those days. A sheriff couldn't serve more than 2 years but he was elected after the 2<sup>nd</sup> year term of another sheriff expired. Later Harry Borden served as sheriff for 12 years. I went through Frank Leslie's hotel the same day.) [Mrs. Elmer "Buck" Wimmer (Edith) (Jan. 20, 1879-Oct. 27, 1964)]
- September 16, 1915 I left Leslie with Florence & George Gorton while Uncle George and Aunt Martha, Mildred, Russell, Daisy and myself went to Monticello for an evening ride. We got back at 8:35 to Liberty.
- September 17, 1915 Russell went over my trip today. We had a hard shower when we were at Chas. Taylor's place.
- October 2, 1915 The automobile balked at the bottom of the driveway and Geo. Drennon (d. April 8, 1954 @ 83) put the ropes on the car and took me to the corner. Then we got around the trip all O.K. It was very slippery and rainy. I got a cream colored kitten at Box 100 today.
- October 10, 1915 We took the automobile and family, also Iva Gerow and May Ebert [May Coddington Ebert (Mrs. Lewis) d. June 25, 1968 @ 88] and went to Roscoe. At Denny Cook's the autumn leaves were just turning. The day was ideal. Got back at supper time. Went to church. Heard Mr. Conrad

preach on women's rights. [Denny Cook of Cook's Falls d. Feb.1,1952; his wife was named Anna and he had a sister named Grace.]

- October 17, 1915 Less Cooper called just as we were ready to go to Cooks Falls to see Carl Cook and wife go to Arizona for Carl's health. We saw Andy Cook & wife, Mr. Marvin Cook the father, and Denny Cook & wife. Also Burnette, the only son. At the depot we saw Moses Westbrook (d. July 21, 1951 @ 86) and Elias Champlin from Liberty. As we were coming back at the top of the hill above the Washington place an auto stopped very suddenly and our car hit it in behind and bent our left lamp a little inward, but the man found no fault. Didn't even speak. The day was warm. No overcoat needed.
- October 27, 1915 I had my first "blow out" with the left hind tire near Divine's Corners. I put on a new tire and inner tube and it leaked by the time I got to Martha Grant's place so I left the car to Ben Gerow's house and got Roxy to finish the trip.
- November 17, 1915 My right hind tire blowed out today ½ way between Greenspan's place and Frank Denman's. I put on a new tire and the inner tube blowed out at Levine Bros., one mile distant from the first blow out all the same trip.
- November 25, 1915 We had Royce's 7lbs. Turkey as usual. Mrs. Cowell took dinner with us. I dug dirt next to the hen house and taught Leslie how to make his first "box trap." I put a window in the end of the hen house toward the east.
- January 16, 1916 The family attended a temperance talk by Mrs. Maud Perkins at the Methodist Church of Liberty in which Mr. Rev. Chasey said that Liberty would be dry in two years. Rev. Conrad led by a prayer. The church was full. It snowed as we came home.
- January 25, 1916 Father came and got a pullet for dinner to celebrate his 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his wedding.
- May 1, 1916 Father and Mother are visiting Cecil and Orië at Philadelphia this week. We expect them back about the 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- June 11, 1916 I took Mother and George to Hurleyville to day to see Dr. DeKay (d. March 31, 1935) concerning George's gallstones. I saw Grace & Chas. and Leonard Farquhar. Daisy and Archie Dice called this Sunday afternoon and took supper, all of us went to the Presbyterian Church exercises for Children's Day. Took them home in the car in the mud after six days rain without chains. Leslie and Russell got a geranium.

- June 21, 1916 I took Leslie and Russell over the trip. It started to rain before we got back. We took lunch at the top of the Kenan Hill.
- August 11, 1916 I took four people from Geo. E. Woods place at Hilldale. Started for Monticello. When I got up the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mongaup Hill the crankshaft broke (price \$7.50). Dr. Hasbrouck towed me in. We took the rope at 7:35, arrived at Gerow's Garage 8:10. Frank Scott got the four dollars and I paid out three to get towed in. 77666 chauffeur license number. [Frank Scott d. 1937; his wife Lena d. Dec. 23, 1961 @ 79]
- Editor's Note: During this period Fred often took people in his car or in the wagon for a fee. It seems to have been \$1.00 per person.
- September 10, 1916 We all went to Aunt Paulina's funeral. She was buried from Cooks Falls M.E. Church. Rev. Lincoln preached, the subject being the children of Israel led through the wilderness and crossing the river Jordan on dry land coming in the Land of Canaan over against Jerico. Mrs. Paulina Steenrod was represented as going over to the Holy City. Lee Steenrod & wife, also Bessie went in his Ford. Ophelia Clark and shaneff (?) took Geo. and Fan. Stoddard up there. It took us 1 hr. 33 minutes to go up and 1 hour and 25 minutes to return. Mrs. Inez Crystal, Daisy's cousin, rode as far as her home in Livingston Manor with us. She gave us some sweet baked apples. We took dinner with Wm. Steenrod. [Aunt Paulina was Elizabeth Polina Misner Steenrod, widow of Daisy's uncle Ed Steenrod (1835-1912)]
- September 22, 1916 We all went to T. L. Maltby's the 20<sup>th</sup> and stayed all night and then Theodore and Nellie, Daisy & myself went to Port Jervis for an automobile ride. We went to Bethel to White Lake to Mongaup Valley to Monticello to Bridgeville to Mamakating. There we had four miles detour turned to right and went to Westbrookville and entered Port Jervis. Left the Ford in a garage and crossed the bridge in the State of Jersey into Matamoras where George Ray (d. Oct. 1968) lives. We came back the same way, leaving Matamoras at 4:30 and got home from Maltby's at nine o'clock to F. S. Gorton's place. Theodore bought some cabbage on the way home.
- October 10, 1916 We took the Ford, Nellie & I, and went to Mrs. Celia Kortright Herbert's place after a pig 3 months old. We started about 6 o'clock AM got back at 5 minutes of 8. Pretty cold ride. Then after supper the family and Nellie and Reta and Harold motered to Maltby's place and brought back 20 pullets for Less Cooper. I drove Roxy over my trip. I rode about 65 miles all told today.
- October 31, 1916 My family, Daisy, Russell & Leslie & Fred, also Mrs. C. M. Peck [Charles



M. Peck d. Jan. 28, 1935 @ 62; his wife, Cora B. Pierce, d. Sept. 29, 1956 @ 82] & Mr. Goodsir went to Roscoe to the County Convention of Sunday Schools. Mrs. Randall, Mrs. Westbrook, Mrs. Holtslander, Mabel Clements (d. Feb. 26, 1964 @ 80), Mrs. Paul, Miss Chamberlain, Mrs. Gildersleeve, Mr. Conrad, Douglas Drennon. The speakers were Mr. Baker, Miss Bird.

- November 12, 1916 I took in my Ford Margaret & James Gorton, also Father & Mother to W. T. Ratcliff's for a calf. Got back at 3:40 and took Jim & Margaret to the 4:10 train. Chas. & Grace come to Father's place after we got back.
- November 14, 1916 I signed paper for Rural Carrier's Pension Bill. Answered 21 questions.
- December 29, 1916 I rec'd check dated Dec. 28, 1916 of \$48 back pay of year ending June 30, 1916. I got \$6.00 off the Route this x'mas. Box nos. 37-61-84-93-94-88. Also no. 96 and no. 10. I got 2 cans fruit 28 ½ 1 qt. maple 613 1 bx. candy 29-1 shirt 61 (Carr's place) D. M. Bakam necktie fine shirt, Leslie gloves, Mama bureau cover, Russell mouth organ, and three handkerchiefs.
- January 13, 1917 I've had Roxy 4 years today. The thermometer stood at 2 below zero today. Joe W. Brown went around the trip today to be my new substitute. I took dinner at Carr's today.
- January 26, 1917 Otto Hillig (d. Sept. 12, 1954 @ 79) gave us, the 3 Leagues, a Magic Lantern views of his trip to California this evening. About 100 persons were present.
- March 8, 1917 Russell is 3' 11" at nearly 7 years. Leslie is 5' tall.
- March 24, 1917 This is the 1<sup>st</sup> day I drove a wagon on my RFD route since December 13, 1916.
- March 30, 1917 I traded horses, Old Nellie or so called Sukie for Prince "the man eater" and drove him the same day over the RFD. Traded with E.E. Pinney. \$30.00. [Ellery E. Pinney d. April 23, 1939 @ 82; his wife was a niece of Webb Horton, who owned the tannery in Ferndale]
- April 1, 1917 8 soldiers came to Liberty to guard the trussel [trestle] and 16 to Ferndale.
- May 21, 1917 A big Pierce Arrow car was in the mud between us & Cowells last night at 12 o'clock. Walter Gerow hooted me out and I took the tie rope & a 2 hooked chain to help them out of the mud. (NOTE: this probably should be April 21, 1917)

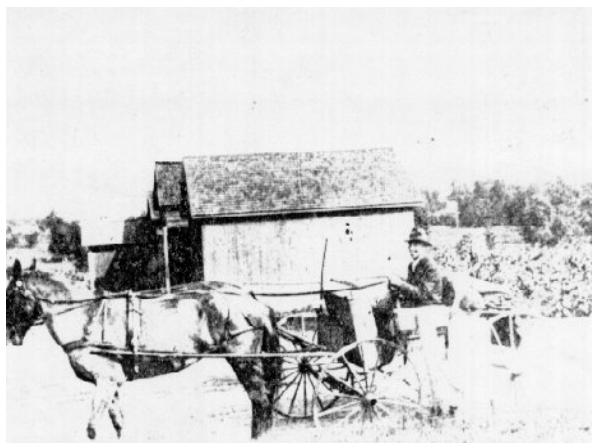
- May 14, 1917 Sold Prince the man-eater to Alf Broadard \$15.00. Bought Mar. 30. Had him 45 days, drove 17 trips over RFD. 3 days later I was offered by Chas. Muhlig \$25.00.[Charles Muhlig d. Nov. 29, 1960; he was Gladys Blade's father]
- May 25, 1917 I took the measles from Russell after 22 years of relief from the same. Father and Mother went to Philadelphia this morning and will return in two weeks visiting Osmer in Jersey City on way home, after Cecil and Orié has 1 week.
- I didn't go on RFD from Thursday until after Decoration Day the 30<sup>th</sup>, six days rest.
- June 6, 1917 Leslie has his new Scout suit.
- July 3, 1917 Daisy & Russell has the red measles. They took to their beds Tuesday evening.
- July 11, 1917 Daisy came downstairs after having the measles.
- July 17, 1917 Leslie & Russell caught 16 catfish at Redington's Pond, when dressed they weighed 1½ lbs.
- August 31, 1917 We went to see Leslie at the Boy Scout Camp at Silver Lake. We took him some plums and a chocolate cake. There were 20 boys including the two Durkind boys (colored).
- September 11, 1917 The Mary Carrier place burned to the ground this morning at 4 o'clock.
- October 19, 1917 To the Fourth Assistant P. M. General Wash. D.C. I Fred S. Gorton resign my position as Rural Letter Carrier to take effect immediately or as soon as possible. I name Mr. John Farenholtz as my successor. He is young and strong and of good habits. I cheerfully recommend him. Fred S. Gorton
- Tuesday, October 16, 1917 (Editor's Note: This entry follows the previous one in the diary)  
I took a job as Fireman at the Liberty Light and Power Plant beginning at \$15 per week with one night off per week.
- October 20, 1917 Leslie, Russell & myself went and picked the apples of Chas. K. Benedict. Cost \$1.50 about 13 bushel.
- October 26, 1917 Father, Mother and Aunt Grace Farquhar took dinner with us today.
- November 6, 1917 Liberty was voted dry by a majority.

- November 9, 1917 We had our first fire alarm. Davis Meat Market. I blew the alarm. Sunderland the call. 10 minutes of 12.
- November 13, 1917 I blew the 7 o'clock whistle at the Power House for the first time. I've been there 4 weeks today.
- November 17, 1917 I had my first lesson with the steam getting low. The lights went practically out at 17 after 8 o'clock.
- November 22, 1917 I sold Roxy to Lew Halprin for \$8.00. I bought her for \$140.00 nearly 5 years ago. Halprin lives near Benton Hollow on the Lewis Place.
- November 27, 1917 Russell's bantam hen laid an egg.
- November 29, 1917 We got a 8 ½ lb. turkey of the Light and Power Company for Thanksgiving.
- December 25, 1917 We celebrated x'mas by having a 20 lb. 6 oz. turkey from the Light and Power Co. Father and Mother were here with us. I got an Ingersoll Eclipse watch for xmas.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: THE R.F.D. CARRIER (in his own words)

One winter there was caterpillars nests on trees and bushes everywhere I traveled. I collected several hundred and offered to give a box of candy in each of the three schools for the one who could collect the greatest number of those nests by cutting the little branch off with the next intact. I got 3000 of those nests, but the teachers divided the candy equally to the scholars so no one won. It cost me about three dollars. I put them in shoe boxes in my barn. One day I saw hundreds of them crawling out and hatching. I put boxes and all in the barrel where I burned old papers. That was the most lives I ever took in one day.

George Hutchinson was Rural Carrier starting from Ferndale at that time and that is where I conceived the idea I wanted to be the first carrier out of Liberty, which started March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1908. I furnished the conveyance (horse, wagon, and feed) and started at \$67.50 per month. Father bought old Dobbin of a young fellow by the name of Howard Bartholomew—harness, halter & blanket for \$65. Dobbin was a former race horse when they raced on Loch Sheldrake



Pond. I kept her for five years and had her when I first lived in our barn and had a building 14' square I built all by myself. She got lame and I sold her to Chas. Benedict to be killed out of her misery for \$1.50.

My hours was 10:30 to 4:30. I served a twenty-seven mile route. Upon returning to Liberty from my trip on the RFD route I was speeding with Old Dobbin when I met Mr. Rampe and a coach dog belonging to Dan Wickham's livery stable. He was extra large and a beauty but just as I came dashing along the dog stepped close to Mr. Rampe, with 4" wide tires on his wagon, and his front foot was crushed. I never told of it but was sorry I drove so fast past the heavy wagon and the dog scooted too near the wheel and got his foot run over.

My first wagon had no top but used an advertising umbrella for shelter. I owned a bay mare (bought from Mrs. Will Nichols) who tried to run away with me. I swung the umbrella handle a half turn and let it go in the air into Lake Ophelia. I never saw it again. I whipped the horse all the way to Bonnell's Mill and she was so winded she slowed down, so I turned around and finished the trip without further event.

W. F. Doll boarded at the Leslie farm house for a few weeks. He owned a large lake and a boarding house, Lake Liberty. The lake had fine pickerel and bass. Mr. Doll made his fortune in South America but never told what his vocation was. He wore cowboy laced boots with a side pocket containint a dagger 8 inches long, so I was told by our mailman, Mr. Kimball. One time he came out next to his little bungalow and introduced me to a girl about eighteen years old. He said if I wanted some "fun" to go in the bungalow with her, as she "is tops to give a good time." I told him I was married and didn't need any extra now or any time. Mr. Doll later got in a fight with another man in Liberty and he poked his opponent in his eye with his cane, which he always carried but didn't need. He was about sixty years old then. He was fined \$15 but wouldn't pay so he went to the County Jail for fifteen days. While there the Sheriff let him have his cane and the prisoners were allowed to exercise in the long hall in front of the cells. Mr. Doll made use of his cane by poking out thirty-six windows before he was stopped. [It's thirty-seven in another account, written when Fred was 90.] It was told that Mr. Doll in winter would go naked to the lake, break a hole in the ice, and take a dip in the ice water. He opened the flood gate in the lake and netted a hundred fish. One day Mr. Doll had eight nice fish for me, about one pound each. They were suckers, but good. [Elsewhere Fred says it was six fish, 7½ pounds each. Perhaps this was a second present of fish?]

I used to serve mail on the rural delivery to Mr. Rosner. One day when I came along his daughter received the mail from my hand and got between the wheels of my wagon so I couldn't start up. So, in a joke, I told her I would like to spend an evening with her. She looked me right in the eye, said "all right." I was married and she knew it. I didn't do it. Later I learned Eva Rosner was having two boys staying all night with her in their barn. Arthur D. who lived on the next farm, and Willie D., two miles distant. Each one asked his father if he could spend the night with his friend. Request granted. This went on all summer. Mr. Rosner told me something would happen to Eva for her sin. The next boarding season she wasn't there anymore. I didn't ask why. Both boys got married. Willie's wife died and Arthur's wife left him after his grandfather's \$3000 ran out. Arthur hit a procussion (sic) cap with a hammer so he had on his right hand a forefinger and a thumb since he was ten years old. Willie died. Arthur was still living in July 1950.

Some girls sitting on the bank with knee dresses wanted me to call that evening. One was married and had a girl six years old. I told her if there was something doing I would. She said, "I

make no promises."

One time, near the Cosmolitan (sic) Hotel, I came upon a black-haired young woman lying with her back end on a large stump and her head down hill. She had very broad hips. As usual . . . I passed by. The day before a girl with as much on as could cover modestly piled in the RFD wagon beside me and it was quite a job to convince her I couldn't take passengers while on duty.

I cut Tom Devine's hay around his place while on the job while Old Dobbin ate her dinner, and drew it home later. At Huntington School little Eva Stanton used to get in and ride from the school house to the David Hall place which was bought by Aaron Stanton. One time Aaron said, "Fred, would you like to have that little rooster?" I took him up and the next day, sure enough, he had him in a bag for me. Aaron was close-fisted and it tickled me to get a gift from him. I had seventy-five hens of my own which he didn't know of.

Many patrons on the RFD route thought I was single. One Sunday Daisy and I was out wheeling a baby carriage. A load of people from Hilldale came along and hollered, "Oh, you married mail man!" Ma thought I passed myself as single. I told her I didn't let strangers know whether I was single or not.

Two girls from the Leslie Farm came to the McIntosh School to get mail as their mailbox was at the schoolhouse. Mamie Rafferty got right in my wagon as I arrived and sat beside me, and grabbed me where my zipper closes. I told her "That thing sometimes raises its ugly head." She says, "Come behind the schoolhouse and I'll put it down." The other girl said, "I will hold the horse until you get back." Anything that comes that easy is dangerous, so I passed it up. A few days later Mrs. George Eltz, another patron, said, "Do you know Mamie?" I said, "I've met her." She said, "Keep away from her," and ran into her house. Her George, age sixty, got burnt. (George Eltz, a farmer on the Loch Sheldrake Road, d. Nov. 12, 1929 @ nearly 67)

C. P. Berylson had a chicken farm in sight of the McIntosh School and wrote a column in the Liberty paper. He was known as "Acid Drops." He didn't care whose toes he stepped on. When he wrote "beautiful eyes and charming ways; the mailman is necessarily delayed," I understood what he meant.

Mark Kortright (d. April 10, 1949 @ 84), a half-mile away, also had his mailbox at the school. His daughter Mabel was courted by a very nice looking Jewish boy but Old Kortright told Mabel he wouldn't let her marry him. To hurt her father, she said, "I'll marry the first man who asks me." Harvey McIntosh (d. January 5, 1945 @ 76), a thirty-five year old bachelor, got wind of it and went right up there and asked her to marry him. She accepted at once. This was about 1917. It made quite a stir in the neighborhood because Harvey wasn't thought of as a good catch, but they lived on a farm and reared eight children, all of whom turned out to be good citizens. As rural carrier, I heard all the news that got the tongues wagging.

A new school teacher from this same schoolhouse asked me to deliver a little sealed letter to Will Nicholson (d. June 20, 1947 @ 65; his 400 acre farm became Grossinger's airport). She was blushing real red. "And don't leave it in his mailbox, hand it to him if possible." Will happened to be there. I gave it to him. He smiled and thanked me. Later she married a nice man. They built a new home and lived near my home in Liberty.

In 1910, I was outside my home and a plane was heard running rather low and quite noisy. I heard a crash like trees being broken off. Two days later it was reported seven lives were lost in the woods six miles north of Livingston Manor. So many people went to the scene of the

accident a beaten path was made. The cause of the plane crash was never known.

One time when Rev. Warren J. Conrad was our minister (it was perhaps 1910), the Bible Class had a supper at the Hall House, now the Lenape. James Cusator and Rev. Conrad arranged for a supper. They took care of all the details, menus and all, Eva Weed Ray (Mrs. Frank G. Ray) was cook. I believe I as Treasurer paid her \$2.50. Each Sunday we were expected to pay 25¢. I paid if any member was absent on Sunday. We had perhaps \$4 in the treasury. I could have stopped it by saying there will be no supper until the cost is in the treasury. We had six or eight members in the class which cost \$1.25 each. After the supper I asked by mail for each member to pay \$1.25. The next Sunday R. A. Monroe (Roswell A. Monroe, bank president; d. Oct. 26, 1945 @ 85) chided me by saying he never was asked before the pay the ante after the spree was over. I let this go through just to tell many years later how dumb the Rev. Conrad and James Cusator could be. Eva Weed Ray died February 4, 1964 at 88. Rev. Warren J. Conrad died April 10, 1964 at 76. James Cusator died December 14, 1966 at 85.

It was about 1910 [Editor's note: elsewhere Fred says it was about 1912] when I arrived at Liberty Post Office with my collected mail from the RFD route and as I was emptying it in the large tray some of the office force set a large firecracker behind me. The fuse was lit and sputtering. I looked around and spied it and watched until the fuse burned to its top, then kicked it right at the two men standing against the wall, Arch Armstrong and Jay Stewart. It exploded mid-air, half-way from me to them, with a loud roar. Solomon Royce was Postmaster and didn't seem to be scared in the least, but the two men whose heads might have been blown off turned very pale and decided not to try any more stunts on the rural carrier as he was a very dangerous character to deal with. Armon McPhilamy came in from the lobby to find out what happened. It gave the people in the lobby a scare. The weekly paper didn't print it. Andy Sirocco got smart and grabbed me when I returned from the route, so I came in the back door and hustled him across the floor, gave him the hip lock, and threw him heavily to the floor. He never bothered me after that. Archibald P. Armstrong died July 6, 1963 at Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital, Cooperstown @ 79. He was county treasurer for twelve years and a printer and married five times: 1) Molly Whitaker (d. April 11, 1934); 2) Jennie Grant, his first wife's nurse; 3) Harriet McDonald (d. June 28, 1950 @ 65; widow of Milton J. McGibbon); 4) Mary Palmer Bailey (d. Aug. 13, 1961; daughter of Brundage and Mary Palmer Bailey and widow of Mr. Little of Kiamesha); and 5) Mrs. May Whitaker. Jay Stewart was 69 years old on Feb. 10, 1961. Solomon Royce died July 12, 1924.

I bought a large bay mare of Mrs. Nichols. Now The Grossinger owns the place. I hooked her up to the light lumber wagon to get a looking glass for a friend at the Liberty Freight House which stood where Killains' Transfer building now stands. As I just got the looking glass in the wagon, the horse switched her tail and caught the lines and it tangled under her feet. She started to run toward the Fulane Company Place. Sherman Ernhout had a Feed & Coal and Lumber combined. I was without the lines. We crossed a narrow bridge, the horse swayed as if to throw me out. Seth Annis was at the mill. I yelled and asked him to knock her down with the scoop shovel he had in his hand. He waved the scoop and the mare stopped. I was so upset I forgot to thank him. I have been told never to jump in a runaway. You will come out better if you stay in, as maybe someone may rescue you.

[Editor's Note: This incident, unlike the previous ones, did get written up in the newspaper. The clipping Fred saved reports a slightly different version of the story:

*While at the station last Thursday evening after an express package, Freddy S. Gorton, the R. F. D. carrier had what might have been a serious runaway. While loading a mirror into the wagon a piece of paper blew in front of his pacer, which he recently purchased and which has a very fast mark. The pacer started down the hill toward Ernhout's mills. Freddy jumped into the back of the wagon and climbed over the seat. When he found his reins were under the pacer's feet, and having been taught in childhood to sit still and never jump during a runaway, he settled himself into the bottom of the R.F. D. wagon. On the street leading to Ernhout's mills is a creek about 40 feet deep, and when near this, men hearing Freddy saying "Whoa" in loud tones ran into the road and shook a sheet in front of the racing steed and in getting past it took Freddy off the bridge, but luck saved him. Just before he reached the mill, Seth Annis ran out and hit the runaway with a coal scoop and before the steed could get up he had him by the bridle and a serious accident was averted. In payment for the mad flight the pacer had to do fifty miles the next two days and wear hobbles.]*

One day about 1910 I decided to drive Old Dobbin the whole length of Hilldale Lake on the ice and get my name in the *Liberty Gazette*, but skipped two boarding houses by so doing.

A plaster mason boarded with my wife and I in winter about 1912. Will LaBarr (d. Dec. 16, 1969 @ 80) used to walk Lena Gerow (d. Aug. 13, 1963 @73) home from the store in Liberty village where she was a saleslady, about a half mile. One night he got fresh and insulted her. She told him never to call on her again. He really expected to marry her. He asked me to write a letter of apology which he would copy, so I did for him: "Dear Lena, I am heart sorry for the way I treated you Sunday night, and I promise I'll never let it happen again. I want to make up and still be friends." She forgave him and after they were married (on Sept. 12, 1916) she told me she couldn't believe he could word such an apology. I intended to tell her whose brain wrote the words for him to copy, but she died before him.

Amasa Prince asked me to leave his letters to Frank Denman's mailbox before I came to his home as his mother got his letters before he got home from work. He was courting a Jewish girl named Bessie Nabatoff. Both his mother and the Nabatoff parents objected to this courtship. I did his bidding and they got married and had three children. After he died I wrote her a nice letter. Told her I was sorry for her loss and about how I helped save her letters from his mother. She wrote me a nice latter and said they lived happily until his death (Feb. 23, 1968) at age seventy-eight. Fifty-six years of marriage.

In 1912 or 1914 we had a big snow storm. I went out each day and made part of the RFD route on foot, or used the horse part way, leaving the horse with someone while I made another loop, coming back again for the horse. One time I left the horse tied at the bottom of the hill near S. Duberoff's and walked to the Oliver Cooley (Sept. 1875-July 25, 1955) place and left five partrons' mail there, and returned to turn the horse around and go on Loch Sheldrake to serve some more patrons. This same winter I went in the fields off the road five times to serve the route. One day I walked maybe ten miles. The O&W train got through at Taylor's Crossing and I got on and rode to Liberty, the only time I carried mail by train.

At the Workman's Circle Sanatarium I met Dr. Rayvesky. He hooked his sleigh staves on mine and threw Old Dobbin down. I was pretty mad but done nothing about it.

Morris Seiken bought the Lake Liberty Farm of W. F. Doll and ran a boarding house in

summer. He had a pump house to get water up to the house run by electricity. The pump stopped so he went in the pump house to start the pump. It was dark in there so he lit a match and was blown through the roof and killed. This was about 1912. I was rural carrier from Liberty at the time and a month later Mrs. Seiken asked me for my Liberty Register to get the printed account of his mishap and death. I didn't have it but referred her to the Liberty office. Morris Seiken Jr. didn't want to go in the army in 1917 so submitted to appendix operation and died. Liberty Village bought the above lake after the boarding house burned down March 26, 1955. I think the United States government paid about half of the purchase price and we made a dock for boating and a black top driveway with picnic tables.

The boys of Liberty on Sundays used to go to Ferndale to get the Sunday papers. They either used a horse or a bicycle and rushed to White Lake with the Sunday News and sold them to the city people boarding there. By coming to Ferndale, a two mile distance, they got the jump on other boys who got their papers from Train #9. This saved ten minutes time. The O&W railroad was in full swing at that time and did a thriving business carrying city folks to Sullivan County in the summer season. The Ontario and Western railroad had as high as nine coaches on one train and every seat was generally filled. The Liberty depot had two wings and at train time two or three hundred waited under this long roof. The Liberty stables had as high as 20 horses in summer. We had three livery stables in the business and a few private folks doing livery work too.

In 1912 Teddy Roosevelt made a speech from the upper porch of the New Liberty House. He was running for President on the Bull Moose ticket against Wm. Taft. I, Fred Gorton, and twin Floyd, ate dinner in the Old Liberty House by invitation of Mrs. Payne, who ran a boarding house across from Old Hornbeck's place. Also Fred Payne, her son, was with her.

Rev. George Murry Colville came to Liberty as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in 1914. He had lost his wife just before he came here. He preached at three different churches in Binghamton before he came to Liberty. Our Presbyterian church paid him \$1200 a year but Chandler Young, our first bank president, paid \$500, making his income \$1700. He boarded with the Newton Clements, met a maiden lady thirty-five years old there, and married her. He was the best Gospel preacher we ever had. At a men's meeting he told of some travels in foreign lands. One time in Egypt he stayed with a man who had five wives. He asked Rev. Colville if he would like to see his latest bride. She was eighteen years old and came out naked and well built too. A dear friend of Rev. Colville's lost his wife and three days after the funeral wanted Rev. Colville to marry him to her sister. He said she looked so much like his late wife. After due explanation, Rev. Colville married them. The sister lived with them, so he thought it better that way. Rev. Colville was stricken with encephalitis and died twenty months after he came to Liberty, on February 10, 1915, at sixty-three.

I bought a Model T Ford July 7, 1915 for \$467.50 delivered. Charles Crawford (d. Nov. 8, 1955 @ 92; blacksmith at Stone Ridge near Newburgh) got one at the same car load. The automobiles came in a box car on the O&W. Ben Gerow sold the car to me and Lee Crook (d. May 30, 1965 @ 73; m Elsie Helbig, who d. Sept 25, 1947 @ 55) loaned me \$250 to pay for it. I paid a man who knew how to drive to go with me for two days and expected him the third day but he didn't show up so I drove alone after that. My first license number was 8482, next number was V5284, next A-51-966 and last one A64-112. I sold to Jim Manion of Livingston Manor for \$175 cash.



My first blow out occurred near the Tom Deviny place. We had to crank the car as self-starters didn't exist. One couldn't take the wheel off as now with six nuts and bolts, but had to jack the car up, take the shoe off, and patch the inner tube and blow it up with a foot pump. It took me half an hour before I got started again. Will Nicholson bought a Ford and I taught him how to take the shoe off and patch the inner tube. It was on my regular trip too. On my vacation I dug potatoes and helped the Nicholson boys thrash oats and buckwheat on the farm. I received \$1.50 a day.

My horse Roxy was in pasture in the old Jim Schoonmaker place on the Loch Sheldrake Road. When I went to catch Roxy to use her for the winter she would turn around tail first at me, so I took her by the tail and came up beside her and put the halter on and we came home. I hired a livery horse every Thursday to spell Roxy but she made the trip five days per week nearly all winter.

I drove my Model T Ford three summers over the RFD route, but never got stuck so bad as to have anyone help me out. But sometimes I had to get stones from the stone wall to block up the hind wheels when I got stuck. About four months in winter I used horses to make the trip. They didn't plow the roads in those days. We generally had good sleighing from Christmas until March 15<sup>th</sup> or April 1<sup>st</sup>. I used a single horse. The staves was shifted so as to let the horse travel in the left side path as there was a comb between the two paths

February 19, 1916: I served the RFD trip with difficulty. I sent Wm. Green's (d. Jan. 9, 1951 @ 78; m Alice Deviny) to Crary's from Devine Corners and upset twice in going to Clements'. Lost my horse feed in the field. Met Mr. Drennon at Clements'. Roxy the horse wouldn't stand so I jerked her and broke the turret on the saddle of the harness. I arrived to Alvin Brown's (d. May 18, 1967 @88) and the road was closed with a ladder so I put Roxy in his barn and put all the mail in the sack and traveled on to Cooley's. It was 12:30 PM. I took dinner at Cooley's and left eight patrons' mail there—C. Taylor, Annie Devine, Frank Carr, Chas. Benedict, Dewey Carr, Morris Seigel, Aaron Stanton, Jas. Osterhout (James H. Osterhout was buried June 17, 1935?). I went to Geo. Earl's (George Earl married Lillie Hankins; she d. Feb. 2, 1945 @ 80). There I met him with the ox sled below Max Keller's place, breaking the road for me. Then to Pshonick's [Mrs. Israel (Rose) Pshonick d. March 19, 1948 @ 66], then to Prince's, and left Frank Denman's mail there. I met Glenn and Ernest Porter (d. May 2, 1956 @ 66). At Levine's place left Kalmanson's paper. It took forty-five minutes to reach Chas. Spitzer's place from Tony Vantran's. Next stop Myer Abramson. The bull pup came out and I called him a son of a bitch for chasing me. I went to Bonney's Corner. Sold 20¢ of stamps to McIntosh up to the McIntosh School. Two boxes there and on to C. P. Berylson's place to get signature for the special delivery letter for Mr. Kahn. They offered me coffee. Went on to Joe Bonnell's. Saw Fred Beseth. Went to Nicholson's Corner. Sat down, put Beseth's mail in his box. The drift was high. Next stop Bushlovitz. Here I went in their house and cleared my felt boots of snow and ice. They offered me some tea but it looked like liquor in a glass. I took none. I passed on through Workman's Circle to Howard's place. Here I asked him to take Wm. Abplanalp's (d. Dec. 24, 1954 @ 84?) mail to him. I had no mail for Abe Zeller so I went to Den Brock's, box 102. Took a cup of tea there and then to Alvin Brown's to get Roxy. They had unharnessed her and they hooked her up while I rested and visited with his wife. I got in Liberty Post Office at 7:05 PM so lame from walking I felt it for two days. I presume I walked seventeen miles over the route. Quite a long walk when one is used to riding. The snow was perhaps two feet deep.

March 9, 1916: I started over my trip on RFD. I skipped 11 to 16 but went to Mr. Robt. Smith's box and returned to Joe Brown's. Took dinner and left there just as the clock struck twelve. Thence to Crary's and Newton Clements'. They offered me dinner. I got a signature for the special delivery at P.A. O'Malley's (lived next to Nichols School) and when I got to J.R. Gerow's she asked me to dinner and coffee and Jas. Wyncoop (James Wyncoop d. Oct. 4, 1934) asked me to eat. I stopped and took tea. Dewey Carr and wife also offered me dinner. Mr. Tripps was there. Also Dewey's sixteen month little girl. Aaron Stanton met me halfway to the corner. Took his mail and Jas. Osterhout's. I retraced back to Geo. Earl's place. Mr. Earl was at Cooley's Corner to meet me but I went past Earl's to Arch Kirschbaum (d. April 6, 1949) and Prince's and Fred Vantran (Frederick M. Vantran d. April 18, 1962 @ 73 in Livingston Manor; married Delia O'Keefe, who d. Oct. 4, 1958 @ 76; farmer)met me at the corner by Two Bridges and I gave him Levine Bros. mail, Kalmanson #72, also Chas. Spitzer. I turned for Liberty, went past Pshonick's to Alvin Brown's. Brown hooked up the cream colored horse while I went in their house and heard four phonograph records. They had a live hen in a pail with two sticks of wood to keep her in. She could stick her head out. I was taken to the post office by Elu, the son, with his covered sleigh. Otherwise I walked or ran all the way. It was 5:30 PM.

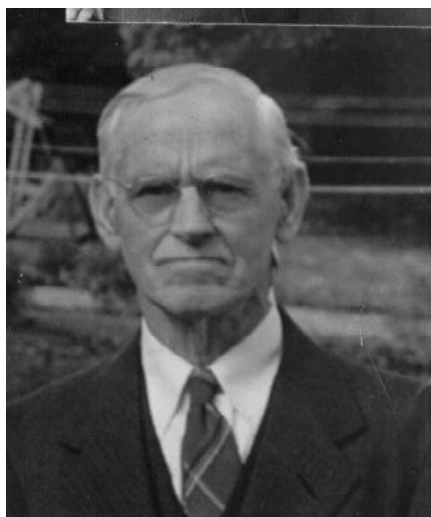
March 25, 1916: I went out in the field all these places to serve the RFD route: Crary's road was blocked with snow from Mrs. Mary Simmons' to Crary's Corner; took the field at Morton's to J.N. Clements'; went in the woods next to Martha Grant's; next blockade was A.B. Stanton's and Prince by Mauer's Corner. Retrace to Seigel's through Geo. Earl's place; Prince place to Geo. Eltz, W.E. Porter. No road from the Rexford place. We went in the field to the left from Levine's place through his barn yard to Tony Vantran's; up in the field to Spitzer place; in the gully halfway to Abramson's place; at the top of Nicholson's Hill; in the meadow to the Workman's Circle. Here we dash out of the road to the Cold Spring House. Four roads past Seiken's we go into John Nicholson's field, left past his barn, and come out at the bars. We cross Den Brock's lot to the sand bank by Howard Rowe place, the last place in the field making twelve places apart from the regular road traversed by the RFD route from Liberty.

October 17, 1917: I served a twenty-seven mile route and the same night served as fireman thirteen hours in the Liberty Power House.

# THE LIFE OF A PLODDER FRED GORTON'S 95 YEARS

## Part Three

an account compiled from his memoirs and diaries  
by his granddaughter  
Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson



*Fred Gorton in 1948*

## INTRODUCTION AND DISCLAIMER

You are reading Part Three of the memoirs of Fred Gorton, consisting of Chapters Five and Six of THE LIFE OF A PLODDER. Please see separate files for the remaining chapters and APPENDIX I, II, and III.

This pdf file is fully searchable by using the "find" feature and typing in the name or place you are interested in. The font size can also be enlarged for easier reading. The text is being made available in this format so that it may be easily printed or downloaded, but I would appreciate acknowledgment of the source if you choose to reproduce any of the material elsewhere.

The complete LIFE OF A PLODDER contains the following: CHAPTER ONE: THE CHILD, CHAPTER TWO: THE YOUTH, CHAPTER THREE: THE MARRIED MAN, CHAPTER FOUR: THE R.F.D. CARRIER, CHAPTER FIVE: THE COMPANY MAN, CHAPTER SIX: THE SENIOR CITIZEN, APPENDIX I: EXCERPTS FROM DAVID HALL'S DIARY, APPENDIX II: ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY FRED GORTON ON MAY 2, 1963, and APPENDIX III: MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ABOUT PEOPLE FRED GORTON KNEW.

I have tried to select those events in his life and those entries in his diaries which best show the man and his times. I hope he would have been pleased. The original version of this book was made for Fred's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. There were five copies printed in 1980 and then thirty-five more including additional photographs. This new version is revised and expanded, with an attempt made to identify the people Fred Gorton wrote about. Unless I was certain of the correction, I have left the spelling of names as he wrote them. I've also left his spelling for "trashing buckwheat" and the like. Typographical errors are mine. Those involving dates may well have been missed in proofreading, since they wouldn't be caught without checking each one against the original. Please feel free to send corrections to me at [emerson@megalink.net](mailto:emerson@megalink.net).

The opinions expressed in these pages are Fred Gorton's. He was not politically correct by modern standards. Neither was he concerned about libel or slander. He may have been wrong in some of his statements, but he believed he was recording nothing but the truth. I make no apology for him, nor for sharing these records of historical interest with a wider audience. If any of the descendants of those mentioned herein wish to dispute one of my grandfather's comments, I will be happy to add their side of the story to this document and put the revised version on line.

Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson  
[emerson@megalink.net](mailto:emerson@megalink.net)  
Wilton, Maine  
February, 2005

P.S. To those who have read my novels, in particular *Julia's Mending* and the forthcoming *No Mortal Reason*, some of this material will sound very familiar. For more information on my professional writing, as opposed to this project, which was a personal labor of love, please see my website at [www.kathylynnemerson.com](http://www.kathylynnemerson.com)

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE COMPANY MAN

Fred Gorton went to work for the Liberty Light and Power Company on October 16, 1917. He would work there for over twenty-nine years and at one point during that period both of his sons would be employed by the company too.

He started as a fireman, working six nights a week with Friday's off at \$15 a week. The Plant was located up the tracks from the railroad station. It had four turbines run by steam produced by three huge soft coal furnaces. When the Plant was running full blast it kept the firemen, as Fred was for the first three years, busy throwing coal on. The Plant had a steam siren and a blast horn used to mark the noon hour and as a fire alarm. When he got a telephone call, Fred would pull the cord for the siren and then blow the call pinpointing the location of the fire on the blast horn.

*Dick Pearson (d. Jan. 1958 @ 80) was Engineer at the time but a few weeks later he quit and went to Binghamton in a Power Plant. William Miller (Oct. 14, 1870-Dec. 30, 1961) was day Engineer on an eleven hour shift. Chief Engineer William Sunderland asked Miller and I if we wanted to take on the extra day and make \$17.50 per week. We agreed, so I worked 13 hours a night for the next six years with Sunderland as Chief Engineer. We had two hours each to sleep when everything was smooth.*

*Sunderland started very soon to teach me how to run the plant as an Engineer. In two months I was changing the load from the engine to the turbine. To start the plant one would have to get the load on the engine first, then synchronize them on the switchboard, then phase in, slamming down the switch to the incoming unit. We also had a regulator to govern the load and we put on the street lights when it became dark, by hand, and took them off at daylight. We used buckwheat coal for fuel fired by hand. We banked one side of the furnace and pulled the red hot chunk of ashes out on the wheelbarrow. Then we pulled the banking over on the empty grate.*

Later Fred took a correspondence course from I.C.S. in steam engineering.

*While working for the NYS Electric and Gas Corporation I installed two Heiny boilers and a 500hp and 625 KVA turbine and a spraying system in the pond where we got our water supply for cooling two pumps at the pond as the raise was 50' up to the plant. In zero weather the coal got frozen solid two feet deep and I was asked to go back to the plant and help Miller the next day after working all night. So without asking Mr. M. R. Sloan (Morris R. Sloan, d. Aug. 18, 1924 @ 51), I bored a place through to let the steam hose into the coal pit and turned on the steam, sticking the nozzle into the frozen mass. Soon the coal ran like water. Mr. Sloan didn't say a word and I got a half day's pay for coming back that forenoon. We used the steam hose to blow the ashes off the water tubes of the boiler. Many times I came back to do extra work forenoons, such as clean the damper in the stack, help the men to repair the steam line, clean the combustion chamber. At 130 degrees one couldn't stay in over five minutes of it would roast his lungs. I also went in the boiler shell using a lamp so I could see and one time I touched the cord to the boiler side and got a shock. The boiler shell was 22 feet long and 3½ ' in diameter with an*

*oval opening 16'2".*

*One night we got low water in the boilers, and no water was showing in either glass water guage. We increased the pumps speed and put water in one boiler until a blubber showed, then the other one. I asked what we should do if no water showed and the boilers would blow up. Mr. Sutherland said "Run like Hell toward the Depot." One forenoon we had a scaffold up under the steam line (10 inches in diameter) to repair a leak. Mr. Applegate was in charge with Ernie Porter (d. Aug. 3, 1958 @ 81) for his helper. I asked Ernie to give me a stillson wrench. He was on the floor with nothing to do, but he refused and said he wasn't working for me. I felt after working all night he could wait on me. If I had had that stillson wrench at that moment, I'm sure Ernie's head wold have bled and maybe I would have killed him. In all my life I never was so mad.*

*The war was on and the Company used to sell the accumulated ashes for a dollar a load. Mell O'Meara used to come at 6:30 AM so as to get the ashes before other peopoe came but run the bill and paid nothing. The Village built a round building 30' from the Power Plant to hold tar for the road. Mr. M. R. Sloan sold hot steam from the boilers to thin it.*

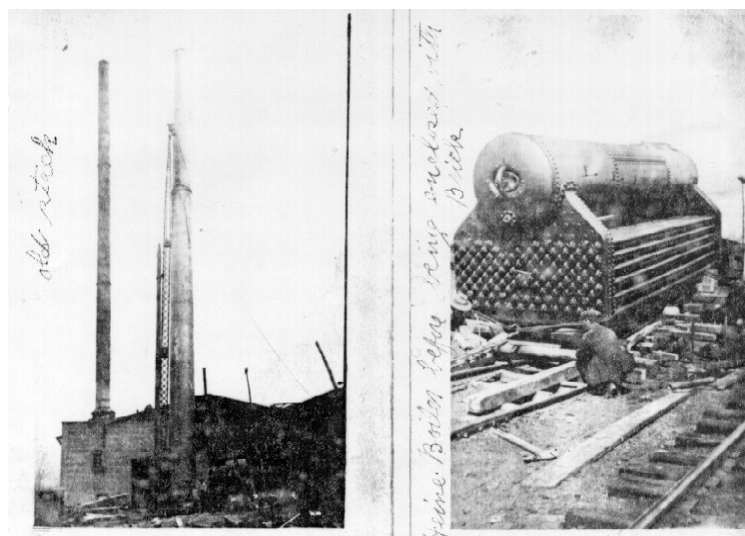
*William Sunderland was the chief engineer. He had a dog which he used to bathe in the evenings, and there was also a black cat on the premises. The cat kept looking at the dog in the bath in a wash tub, so one night Sunderland grabbed the cat and put her in the tub. Always after that the cat quickly disappeared when the tub was brought out.*

On January 22, 1921, Fred wrote in his diary: "We finished putting in concrete for the Power House stack. Its dimensions are 7'x7'x5' deep and 2" from the brick wall. The men were Wm. Sunderland, Claude Cogswell, Kenneth Miller, and Leslie Gorton and Fred Gorton. Leslie got 35¢ per hour." [Claude Cogswell d. June 15, 1959 @ 54; Kenneth Miller d. April 8, 1934 @ 29]

The new stack was 5' in diameter and 125' tall and it was set up in one piece by using an electric device and a gin pole 80' high. There were also a new turbine, called the "Turban," by Fred, two water pumps to pump water 50' up to the Plant, and a new exhaust water heater. In 1923 the company, now the Associated Gas & Electric Corp., began to get light from the 33,000 volt line from Mongaup Falls, thirty miles away.

*1921 to 1924 I was the Night Engineer and I pulled the switch many times, even when it rained, standing on the wet ground. Later the company had a stool to stand on with four insulators the size of dinner plates for protection. In 1923 I was told the 2300 volts we carried was in the wall and the water leader at the corner was electrified. I took the back of my hand and slapped the leader. It seemed my knees turned the other way.*

Fred shut down the Liberty Plant on December 18, 1924. The Turban was taken down, crated, and sent to Prince Edward Island. Fred, so briefly an engineer, was back to plodding from



*The old stack*

*Heine Boiler before being enclosed with brick*

one job to another. He was working as a lineman when he witnessed a total eclipse of the sun on January 24, 1925. He was in a tree in front of Archie Ingraham's place (d. July 10, 1960 in Old Greenwich, CT @ 70; clerk at Young, Messiter & Dodge c. 1912 at \$9/week; later had his own store). Fred said in another account that he was trimming trees at B. F. Green's boardwalk. He recorded in his diary that although it was 9:13 in the morning the effect was that of "bright moonlight on the white snow" with "no need of streetlights at all." He saw many people with smoked glass peering at the sun. He could see three stars in the heavens near the sun. "Also when I cleaned the 5 foot diameter stack, 125' high, I could see 2 stars in broad daylight; also when I cleaned the Gulnac Well, it being dry at that time, I saw 3 stars. The well was only 11' deep."

One of Fred's jobs as lineman-climber was to rope the trees to pull them away from the Hi Line. This may have been a typical day:

July 20, 1925 We picked up two poles at Stevensville, took them to the DeGroot place and set them. We got four and six pen cross arms, took them to White Sulphur Springs behind Leona Hotel. Eronimous took Jay and I to the Plant. I washed Mr. Kramer's car and Jay went to Buckley Street to dig two holes. 11½ hours.

On November 10, 1925, Fred had a fall from an ash tree that ended his days as a climber for the electric company.

*Near the Delbert Sutherland (d. Dec. 8, 1944 @ 59) place next to Loomis the hooks of the climbers became filled with the bark, which let me go to the ground. I sat down on a coil of rope, a fall of about 15'. My ribs hit my hip bones and I got a stiff right wrist. I was laid up for two weeks. The boss sent me home. I arrived to find Daisy was calling on Mrs. George Upham*

*(Adelaide Upham d. July 27, 1940 in Binghamton @ 70; George Upham d. July 27, 1930 @ 67; he was a brick mason and they lived in a house next to the railroad) and the doors locked. I got my 12' ladder and climbed on the back porch roof over the kitchen.*

Fred stayed with the Line Gang as a groundman, digging holes and raising poles. Alva (Alvie) Eronymous (Jan. 29, 1884-Sept. 18, 1952; wife Delia Smith d. June 5, 1939 @ 60) was foreman and Charles Ray (Nellie J. Miller, Mrs. Charles Ray, b. May 23, 1882, d. Nov. 1948) used a team of small mules to draw the poles for them. Fred carried the "dead man" to put under the poles when raising them up. They cut trees in Youngsville, built line in Jeffersonville, spliced wires together when the need arose, and built the sub station at Livingston Manor.

At about this time [1925] there was a murder done with a sash weight that was in all the papers. [Fred calls it the "Snyder/Jud Grey Sash Weight Murder" elsewhere.] The Line Gang out of Liberty carried a sash weight on their truck and used to shake it at drivers in cars that came up behind them. Apparently everyone thought this was hilariously funny.

In 1927, Fred was driving an electric company Model T as street light maintenance man. His job was to replace burned out streetlights in Liberty, Stevensville, Hurleyville, and Woodridge. He narrowly escaped injury on one trip. That day he had Jay Stewart and Ernie Stewart with him and, to avoid a speeding car headed right at them, pulled off and came to a stop just four feet from a wall of rocks ten feet high. On that occasion he was praised for avoiding a collision but another time he was going down Bonnell Hill and two men came out from Neversink Road right in front of him. He was so close to them that the only way to keep from hitting them was to ram into an electric pole. The car had to be junked, and Fred was soon in another job, "walking the line," which involved considerable cross-country hiking to check for broken insulators.

One time Fred had to walk the line at night in the rain. The electric company did not furnish raincoats and the result was a case of pleurisy and lost time. Another time, after an ice storm, he spent over five hours walking from Monticello to Mongaup Falls.

*In 1933 after an ice storm, I inspected the 33,000 volt line starting below Monticello, Cooperman's Corners, near the Monticello Power Plant, to Mongaup Falls hydro electric plant. It had 4 outlets to the engines. The Engineer took me all around the plant but on the way I had to cross a little stream. The water was high and 8' wide. I cut a small tree with my knife for a brace and stuck it in the middle of the stream and swung across without missing. When I was 3 miles from the electric plant I asked a woman how far it was to the Mongaup Falls Plant and she said 3 miles. My feet were sore in those rubber boots and I felt discouraged; before entering the plant was a very steep hill I had to go down. I was 5 hours and 9 minutes from Cooperman's Corners to the Plant. Mr. St. John came for me at 5:15 PM for home. I was 55 years old at the time.*

The following year he walked nine miles of line through rattlesnake country in hunting season to Ten Mile River Camp. He'd been taken there earlier by Jesse Cox so he'd know where he'd end up, so he knew he was in the right place. He arrived about 3:30 PM and waited for Gus Knack (Augustus H. Knack, d. Sept. 18, 1958 @ 63), his ride, until 7 PM. Finally he phoned Daisy and asked her to call Alvie Eronymous to bring him home. Jesse Cox came and got him. Later he found out he'd been reported lost in the woods at Bill Tomkins' store. Both his sons had



heard that rumor, but had kept it from their mother. Fred believed that the entire incident had been cooked up by the district manager, L. V. Rose, in order to make him mad enough to quit and forfeit his pension and he told Rose of his suspicions to his face. Rose just grinned and Jesse Cox and Gus Knack looked guilty. [Leslie V. Rose d. Jan 6, 1936 @ 42 of pneumonia; his wife, Ethel Kidder, d. Dec. 16, 1946 @ 53]

The old Plant was used to store cross arms and for the auto mechanics to repair the cars, and as a gathering place for the men when they reported in for work. Then the company rented a large building on School Street and used the second story for the auto mechanic workroom. Fred became "construction-maintenance-repair man" for the company and built a ramp leading up to it, laid a new floor, and helped install an auto lift. With Andy Smith he built a transformer bridge to load and unload the transformers. He laid the floor in Herman Berberich's (b.Aug. 1, 1910 in Brooklyn) office and put beaver board around the entire lower story and painted it.

Over the remaining years with the company, Fred worked from one to nine every afternoon, putting in four hours of janitorial work after everyone else had gone home. He built desks, cabinets, benches, a board to hang meters on, and stop signs. He put in stairs to the upper garage and built blinds of celotex for the windows during the war. In the past he had helped read meters and had sold company stock. Now he tended the furnace, laid linoleum, and did woodwork, even traveling to Walton and Monticello to improve the appearance of those offices. The job was not without its dangers.

February 12, 1935      We were moving some heavy steel bins using 1" iron pipe for rollers. One of them ran over my big toe on the left foot. It took the nail, busted off the top of my shoe. Eight men were pushing (no chance to stop them). It happened in the store room of the garage.

Later he added that he was too ashamed to report the accident to the boss because when he asked if he could move the bins without unloading them he had said yes. The nail did not grow for many years, but became thick. Then, on December 22, 1962, the nail came loose and he removed it and a new nail grew in.

*Another time I was laying floor in one of the offices upstairs for the electric company and in passing the flooring to another man I got a sliver in my leg above the knee 7/8" long. I tried to remove it, without success, so I went to Dr. Payne. He put some alcohol on with some cotton and took his tweezers and got it out. The man responsible to report accidents thought I should pay the doctor, it being just a little sliver. I informed him I was on the job and it was customary for the company to pay the doctor. Mr. Big Mouth acted real hurt.*

Finally, retirement came. At his party, Fred told everyone he had no complaints. The men joked a good deal and razzed him but he shot back and Don Westbrook told him that he had been "in the driver's seat most of the time."

During all his years with the electric company, Fred kept up his diary. A great number of the entries related to work. His family and his house and garden on Carrier Street account for most of the other entries. His reports of births, deaths, and marriages of people he knew take precedence over broader issues. The first world war is never mentioned, the second only briefly.

The 1923 book is devoted entirely to affairs of the Plant. The following pages contain diary entries of particular interest and excerpts from Fred's memoirs to fill the gaps. Of these there are many, especially between 1918 and 1924. From 1939 on he wrote in Five Year Diaries, which limited his space and consequently the number of details he included in an entry.

- April 12, 1918            I went over the RFD trip for Floyd Wright (RFD Carrier, Ferndale; he married Gertrude Earl). It snowed all day long, a wet snow.
- May 10, 1918            Leslie got his Black Beauty bicycle today. Black frame, white head with red dove tails.
- June 27, 1918           I took Leslie's wheels and went to Garcia's strawberry patch.
- August 17, 1920        Liberty had its greatest flood.

*A little stream which starts on West Street flows to the Power House dam, where the Liberty Light and Power had their two pumps which furnished water for the steam plant. The stream overflowed leading to Clements and Main Streets. The Pierson and Webber store now known as Sabloffs had a cement stoppage over the stream 4' high and 18' wide. Some stumps from the south side of Chestnut Street were washed out and formed a dam at the cement stopping point. Will Mauer, Armon McPhilmany and others got a cellar full of water and some on Church Street. Walter Randall used sand bags to keep the water out of the Presbyterian Church basement. Much damage was done to flour and sugar in the cellar on Main Street. The School garage was flooded later with a similar stoppage under the garage and the Liberty Gazette basement lost tons of bundled paper stored there. And still later, a little four year old girl was drowned and washed down to Mill Street. Briker Brothers Co bought this School Street garage and another flood covered their floor 8" deep and destroyed many dollars worth of pretzels stored on the ground floor.*

*In about 1920, Father lived on 9 Maple Street on the Wallace Kilbourne place which he bought. I used to work his garden on shares and they told me they would sell for \$3800. I went over to Will Mauer's place and told of it and how one could sell it as the Telephone Company's offices were just across Father's driveway. George Mauer made haste to buy it, as he lived upstairs in the same building. He raised Father's rent from \$15 per month to \$30 or \$35 so my parents moved to Fanny Lewis's (d. Mar. 3, 1940; she was the widow of John Lewis Sr. who d. in 1917 at age 80) home on Church Street, using Mrs. Lewis's cookstove as a partnership deal. They soon got tired of that and moved to Fanny Clark's (d. Aug. 6, 1953 @ 94) home, upstairs, in Hurleyville until Father died December 21, 1922. Mother, after a year, went to live with my sister Grace and her husband.*

- February 7, 1924        Leslie got spectacles today at noon.
- May 16, 1924            Russell mowed the dooryard for the first time this season.

- July 28, 1924 Cliff Edwards was electrocuted today near the Queen Mountain House. The first Liberty man lost from accident of the Light and Power Company. (He was on a pole, touched a hot wire (2300 volts) and his leg touched a grounded telephone wire. He fell to the ground dead and was taken to the undertaker by Ralph Quick. Ralph Quick was b. Neversink Nov. 16, 1897.)
- August 28, 1924 Russell went with Milt Gabriel to the Monticello Fair. (Milton Gabriel b. Nov. 11, 1880; d. Feb. 14, 1942 of Bright's Disease; he was a tinsmith.)
- September 8, 1924 Daisy and I went to a banquet at the Hall House given by the N.Y. State Gas & Electric Corporation. Supper was served in courses about 8 PM.
- October 11, 1924 Russell and I went and gathered 1299 butternuts on Katy place near Ben Hasbrouck's and PM got a board 19½ " wide to cover pipes in the front room and made provision for a side light. Russell & I and Daisy went to the movies. That finished my vacation.
- October 24, 1924 Leslie and Uncle Ed came home on the 11:00 PM train after Leslie's vacation in N.Y. City.
- October 28, 1924 Mrs. Rouze and Aunt Sat stopped here on their return trip and stayed all night. (They were coming from New York. They also stayed all night when they went to New York. They were complete strangers to us. I think they had little money. Fanny Stoddard refused them lodging but sent them to us. They claimed relation. Daisy took them in free.)
- October 31, 1924 Went to the Republican caucus at the theater. Roosevelt for Governor. Coolidge for President. Miss Wilson spoke and two men.
- November 3, 1924 Pa is 66 ¾" tall. Ma 63½ ". Russell 64¼" and Leslie 69" tall. All in shoes.
- November 4, 1924 Voted straight Republican ticket. A KKK cross was burned on Hub's hill tonight as returns came in, 8:45. (Ralph Quick and another man burned the cross on Hub Linderman's hill; Hubbard Linderman d. Oct. 30, 1925; his wife d. Nov. 1, 1926).
- November 9, 1924 Went to church with Daisy & Russell AM. Leslie also attended with a miss & in the evening alone. It snowed today. The ground was quite white.
- November 27, 1924 Thanksgiving Day was celebrated by C. C. Farquhar and family, except Earl being busy couldn't come. Grandma was there, also Ed Steenrod. We had turkey and duck, roasted, mashed potatoes & gravy, fruit salad, pumpkin and mince pie, pickles, penuchi & fudge, grapes & English

walnuts, cigars & chewing gum, coffee & cider. Helped Blade butcher two pigs.

- December 25, 1924 Uncle Ed came about midnight before xmas and ate turkey and went home to New York. I stayed home all day and fussed with lamp cords and sockets. Took off both screen doors of the house. We couldn't get anything on the radio all day. (I heard a program with ear phones in 1914 for the first time at Lew Neeley's, but they had sound signals before 1917 at 9 o'clock every night. We used a wire antenna attached to our radio. Leslie bought one from Bill Mauer Jr. for \$90 and we got fifteen stations the first night.)[Elda Neeley, who d. Aug. 8, 1948, sold her house on Carrier St. to the Prettymans; Bill Mauer Jr. was the son of Will Mauer, who d. Aug. 2, 1959 @ 80 and his wife Margaret, who d. Dec. 12, 1953. Will Mauer was a butcher at 60 S. Main St.. His other children were Marguerite, who taught French and Spanish in Liberty schools, and Butch.]
- January 1, 1925 Went to Hurleyville, all four of us, to eat New Year's dinner—turkey, pickles, rolls, stuffing, two kinds of cake, ice cream, mashed potatoes, and the favors were chocolate made up like a liberty bell. Mother attended also. Jake Rexford (d. Sept. 19, 1952 @ 46) and Lucille (Grace and Charles Farquhar's daughter; she married Jake Rexford Oct. 10, 1926) and Leslie went to Monticello PM and Charles and I went to the Greenspan place to settle a dispute. One man broke in a window and threw the contents of a s- - - pot on a woman's stove hearth. We all came home on the Scoot at 7:30.
- January 10, 1925 Leslie is of age today.
- February 23, 1925 Went to Grace's on 10:03 train and returned on 4:18 train. Mother was to Westwood, New Jersey.
- March 22, 1925 Went to church AM and PM. Leslie and Russell went to Middletown in his new Ford coupe.
- April 5, 1925 Went to church. Leslie took us and also in the evening. The Methodists had no preacher so they made quite a churchfull. Leslie took Ma and Russell out for a twenty mile ride.
- May 30, 1925 Decoration Day. I worked in the garden all day. Ed Steenrod came up last evening and stayed over Sunday. Leslie returned from his trip to NYC with Helen.
- May 31, 1925 Went to church with Ed Steenrod AM and PM. I drove Leslie's car to Stevensville and returned and Russell took the car out and then Leslie took

his mother to Woodbourne on the new state road. Leslie started to New York City on his vacation on the 5:25 train along with Ed.

- July 6, 1925 Leslie and Russell went to New Rochelle.
- August 7, 1925 Ai and Mother took supper with us and stayed until 9PM and Leslie came home today.
- August 27, 1925 Stayed home and to bed until noon with another attack of pleurisy. Daisy is canning sweet corn this AM.
- September 4, 1925 Returned home at 5:00 PM after a five day trip to New York. I went down to Westwood with Osmer and family on Sunday evening and stayed all night three nights and Tuesday AM left there and met Leslie at Osmer's office at noon. Went to Hippodrome and got back to New Rochelle at 1:00 AM. Thursday and Friday we went around New Rochelle. We went to the Museum of Art and got back to New Rochelle at 9:30PM and next morning, Friday, we came home, leaving New Rochelle at 10:20 AM and arriving at Liberty around 4:30 PM.
- May 31, 1926 Leslie and wife went home with his car 3:00 PM (Editor's note: Edwin Leslie Gorton married Catherine McKennon on May 11, 1926.).
- July 3, 1926 Daisy picked fourteen quarts of strawberries today. Leslie and Catherinee came home at 10:30 PM to spend the 4<sup>th</sup> and go back the 6<sup>th</sup>.
- September 24, 1926 I had a tooth pulled whose filling had been out for eight years. Dr. Wright fished for it five times before he got the last root. \$2.00.
- October 19, 1926 Russell shot his first rabbit this afternoon and we had it for supper Wednesday, October 20, 1926.
- November 27, 1926 Mother went back to Hurleyville after visiting us for two days. I went home with her and then went to Grace's home and changed the pump switch from the cellar to the cellarway and came home on the Scoot.
- July 5, 1927 Leslie, Catherine, Claire (their daughter), and Miss Margaret McKennon were here over the 4<sup>th</sup> and went home to Mt. Vernon 3:00 o'clock AM Monday July 5.
- August 13, 1927 Leslie & Catherine & Claire came from Mt. Vernon to spend their vacation. Leslie went home Monday August 22 and Catherine & Claire will stay until Labor Day.

- August 20, 1927      Leslie, Catherine & I went to Monticello to see the auto races. The gate fee was \$1.10 each and 50¢ each for automobiles. We also saw the State Troopers perform on horses which was very good.
- October 16, 1927      Daisy went home with Leslie and Catherine and Claire.
- January 7, 1928      I wrote up stock, the debenture bonds, for Mrs. Celia Kortright (d. Aug. 5, 1932 @ 67) for \$1000. She used one Liberty bond due 1938. I went to sell stock with Chas. Beams and at Ferndale Depot we came out on the main road and hit Comfort's car. We settled for \$4. Our car was damaged a little—the bumper, one bolt broke, and fender dented.

On April 2, 1928, work began to convert the barn into a story and a half cottage. Fred had been improving his house right along, for example by tearing out ceiling partition in the Plant and using it for ceilings on his front and back porches. Now he hired Charles Hobart (d. Nov. 8, 1934 @ 61) to dig out under the barn for a cellar and run cement 7½' high, leaving an 8' doorway for a garage under the house. It took eight-seven bags of cement. James E. Dice and his son Archie raised the barn up 15", braced all four sides, and rebuilt it into a cottage using plasterboard throughout and trimming the downstairs. The outside of the cottage was shingled by May 17. On the 24<sup>th</sup> George Upham laid the chimney. On May 31, Archie Dice set up the stairs. On September 18, Fred and his neighbor, Atkins, hooked up the new water line, each paying half. Fred's bill was \$22.37. On October 20<sup>th</sup> the garage door was hung. Sometime during the summer the Gortons moved in and rented the main house to Clem Zeiss and his new bride. During the ten months they were there Fred finished the inside of the cottage. Then, the same day Zeiss moved out, the Gortons reoccupied their house and Ralph and Olive Tremper moved into the cottage. He got stuck in the mud across from Nelson Krum's (d. July 19, 1961 @ 65; Clark Krum & Sons Feed Store) and they had to carry his furniture to the cottage from there. The vote to pave Carrier Street didn't come until March 19, 1929 and sidewalks didn't go in until 1931, when Charles Hobart and Bill Reed used Les Cooper's cement mixer and put them in in two days. The village paid 80% of the cost in five payments. Deducted from the village tax, Fred estimated they paid about \$80.

To pay for the cottage, Fred borrowed \$2500 more from Port Jervis Real Estate and Loan and \$1000 from Mary Martha Hill. He paid \$25 a month on his mortgage and rented the cottage for \$26 a month. The first tenants stayed over two years to be followed by Jesse Hoslander for another two and a half years. [Mrs. Jessie Hoslander was Alta Kortright (June 2, 1905-May 21, 1952)] In April, 1933, Ralph Comfort (d. July 18, 1966 @ 65) moved in for seven years. Delmar Gillette lived there for five months in 1940. Then Leslie and Catherine came. In 1942, Fred bought a cottage in Neversink for \$50 and brought home the pieces to put an addition on the cottage. He also made additions to his own house—a downstairs bathroom and an upstairs apartment. But this is getting ahead of his story.

- July 21, 1928      Born to Leslie & Catherine a son named Eugene Frederick. Claire is fifteen months old now.

- September 15, 1928 Daisy and I went to Oneonta to visit Floyd on 96 River Street and celebrate the twins' fiftieth anniversary of their birthday.
- September 17, 1928 We went to Hartwick Seminary and visited George (his oldest brother) and Martha. Also saw Robert and Mildred. The depot at Hartwick Seminary was about the size of the railroad section tool shanty. One stove and seats on one side, the door without a lock, and no station agent. You have to flag the train yourself and the engineer stops and takes you on.
- September 27, 1928 We received from Frankfort, Kentucky the living room suite from Spear & Company of Pittsburgh at \$99.75. We paid \$5 down. It was shipped out September 11. The O&W Railroad charged \$12.73.
- February 17, 1929 Daisy and I went to church and Ross Tompkins [Ross L. Ingraham Tompkins (d. Nov. 6, 1966 @ 84) had a farm near Neversink where he ran a boarding house when his first wife as alive; he retired there after separating from his second wife (Florence Alena Sparling, who d. Sept. 7, 1965 @ 78); built a house on Jordan Ave. and a store on Cooper Ave.] took us home. I went to Hurleyville today to see Mother. It was the first time I'd ridden on the train on Sunday in over thirty years. I also went to see Grace and Charles. The boys had band practice here today. About seven boys. [Editor's note: This was the band Russell and his friend Tony Raffa formed in high school. Russell played the piano. He met his future wife while playing at a dance she attended.]
- March 2, 1929 Finished painting Russell's room with flat white and side walls light green.
- August 25, 1929 Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gorton and son Russell and Marie Coburg went to Middletown. Called on Mrs. Mary Carpenter, Ira Clarence, also Mr. William Carpenter. From there we went to Port Jervis over the crow's nest into Barryville, Ulan, Black Lake, White Lake, and home about 9:30 PM.
- September 1, 1929 Russell took Leslie, Ma and Pa to Hurleyville today. Quite a reunion at Grace's home. Those present were Mr. & Mrs. Fred Gorton, Leslie & Russell, Mr. and Mrs. George Gorton and Robert, Mr. and Mrs. George Gorton and Bruce, Mrs. C. C. Farquhar, Mrs. Lucille Rexford, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Stapleton and Jackey, our mother Mrs. Lucy M. Gorton, 85 years old. Charles Farquhar was out doing police duty. Also Ai Gorton was present with his camera and took pictures of the group.
- October 3, 1929 I went out all day to sell convertable 6% debentures.
- October 9, 1929 Russell came in our driveway from Cowell's side over the new road for the first time. He was the first one in. Mother came up for a few days to be

with us.

- October 29, 1929      Went to Hurleyville & Russell wrote up five shares of 6% convertible debentures with Mary Ratcliff and Miss Fannie Clark promised ten shares. [Editor's note: October 29, 1929 was Black Thursday but Fred makes no mention of the stock market crash in his diary.]
- October 30, 1929      Daisy & I went to Middletown with Russell, accompanied by Mother and Miss Clark, to get \$1000 to invest in convertible 6% debentures which Russell wrote up. Mother bought our dinner and gave Russell \$2 for gas.
- November 17, 1929    Ma and Russell and Marie Coburg came from Leslie's and Catherine came back with them. Also Claire and Freddie. Freddie walks around by chain and has taken a few steps.
- November 28, 1929    Mother spent Thanksgiving with us. We had turkey won in selling 6% debentures.
- March 16, 1930        We just got back from Hurleyville to celebrate Mother's birthday. She is 86 years old. George and Martha came down from Oneonta & also Walter & Edna and the three boys came.
- June 15, 1930         Russell took me to Farquhar's today. I saw Earl, Charles & Grace, also Mother. Mother broke her collar bone in attempting to lay in a hammock. My brother Leslie and Hazel came there. I haven't seen Leslie since Father & Mother's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.
- October 25, 1930      Russell and Marie went to Leslie's and to Brooklyn for his vacation. [Editor's note: Marie frequently visited Brooklyn where her Aunt Ida Hornbeck Crosby lived.]
- November 22, 1930    Leslie and family came up to Liberty. Also Ma and Russell were down there and returned with Marie Coburg after three days at 26 Lafayette Street, New Rochelle.

In about 1930, one incident occurred which Fred did not record in his diary. With Daisy's permission he escorted Geraldine, a widowed friend of hers, to a dance at the Barkley Hotel. While there he learned that there was a lady with a room in that hotel who let it out to couples, perhaps seven or eight of them in an evening, who were given numbers and called when another couple came out. The same woman also took cloakroom checks but she didn't get any coats unless she got a tip. Fred gave her fifty cents and got the coats but the next day the same woman saw him on his way to work and gave him a look that Fred interpreted as meaning "you piker."

- April 26, 1931        Leslie took Mamma and I to Hurleyville to see Mother. She gave us a



book case which sits on a washstand and three books, including the old family Bible with records of marriages, births, and deaths of the immediate family.

- May 24, 1931 Leslie, Catherine, Claire and Freddie came and took supper. Also Russell and Marie Coburg ate with us. They all went away before 9PM. Russell took Ma and I to the golf course to see the take off of Otto Hillig but he didn't go on account of rain.
- June 11, 1931 Floyd was operated on for appendicitis today. He came through the operation okay and is doing well.
- June 25, 1931 Otto Hillig got to Denmark at one o'clock today on the Liberty.
- July 21, 1931 Otto Hillig came back to Liberty for a reception. Nine planes were here and firemen, boy scouts, and soldiers marched from the golf course to Main Street by the West Point Band. Freddie celebrated his birthday with his grandparents and Aunt Margaret and baby were also here. Three candles on his cake.
- September 16, 1931 Floyd and Alice came to celebrate our birthday and stayed until Friday morning 9:30 AM and took train to Hurleyville. Lee Morton's (Leland C. Morton d. June 7, 1960 in Middletown @ 77) taxi took them to the depot from here.
- October 31, 1931 Russell came home from his vacation in Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Brooklyn, and New York. Marie Coburg went with him. He also called on Tony Raffa while in Philadelphia, fifteen miles from there. Leslie brought Claire and Freddie to celebrate Halloween. They had a pumpkin and two red hats with black cats on them. Claire had a tickler which she blew in and out.
- November 2, 1931 Leslie started his second time around this territory selling Fuller brushes near Ferndale.
- November 9, 1931 I've been painting the two big rooms in the cottage in the rear and got most done by 10:00 o'clock Monday when I was taken with a kink in the back. I laid down on the floor about five minutes and then went back to the other house. I saw Dr. Hampton and he gave me an adjustment. I couldn't walk home.
- November 13, 1931 Mother came up today, Friday, and stayed until Monday 4:30 PM while Grace went on a visit to Long Island. She seemed quite well but much thinner than she used to be. We had a nice visit. [Editor's note: It was at

this time that she told him about her ancestors and started his interest in genealogy. He wrote down the names of his aunts and uncles, grandparents, and great-grandparents on the next page in his diary.]

- November 22, 1931 Leslie and family, also Russell and Marie and Margaret Beerman celebrated Catherine's birthday this evening. Freddie took the little calico kitten home which we found out in the moonlight.
- April 7, 1932 Daisy had her last five underteeth out by Dick Hartman this AM.
- August 9, 1932 Leslie took Daisy and I to see Mother tonight. Martha was met by Edna and Lucille at Hancock to be nurse for Mother.
- September 10, 1932 Born to Mr. and Mrs. E. Leslie Gorton a third child. Her name is Mary Dolores. Eight pounds at 5:45 PM. Both mother and child are doing fine at our house, room over the kitchen.
- December 24, 1932 I went to Hurleyville to see Mother. She has failed during the two or three weeks since I saw her before. Dora Gorton Mould is taking care of her. [Editor's note: Dora was the daughter of Fred's uncle, John G. Gorton]
- January 1, 1933 All of our family were home to eat turkey New Year's Day. Also Miss Marie Coburg of Hurleyville. Russell done justice to the breast meat. All seemed to enjoy dinner. I went to see Aunt Doll at 4 o'clock. I was met at the door by Sherman Misner and his wife soon appeared. They had just finished dinner. Aunt Doll was called downstairs. She is 81 years old and quite deaf but I could make her hear quite well. Leonard Quinn (d. Feb. 4, 1965; he was a little boy at Mary Carrier's in 1904) and his wife and ten year old son called while I was there. The father expects too much of the boy and calls him dumb, but Leonard Jr. likes to read.
- February 16, 1933 Mother was buried today after eight months sickness at Grace's house in Hurleyville. All of the children were at the funeral except Osmer. Osmer was in England doing business and will not be back until February 27. My brothers Floyd and Leslie came on the train to Liberty and stayed to supper; then Russell took us to Grace's home. They stayed all night there preceeding Mother's funeral.
- March 4, 1933 Inauguration Day at noon. Franklin D. Roosevelt was sworn into office and at noon all the banks were closed in New York State. He is a wet Preisident and it is predicted that the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment will be repealed. We'll see.
- March 5, 1933 I went to church in the forenoon and went to the before coming home. I

first went to the soldier's monument, then to Mother's grave, and then across to the old to see the children's graves.

- April 10, 1933 Leslie and family went with me to Monticello Surrogate's office today to hear Mother's will read.
- April 25, 1933 Toughey had four kittens from an angora male.
- June 11, 1933 Russell took me to Hurleyville to see Grace and Charles. Charles is very sick. Lucille and Edna came while I was there. Lucille and Jake Rexford took me home after supper and Daisy sent a bouquet of peonies to Grace, white and red ones.
- July 11, 1933 Ma and I went to Charles Farquhar's funeral with Mell and Stell Blade. [Melvin Blade (Feb. 6, 1891-March 1, 1949) was an O& W foreman; he married Fred's cousin, Estelle Gorton (d. March 15, 1954 @ 81)] Floyd and Alice came and took coffee with us. Mr. Nichols and two daughters came with them also. Seven policemen and two state troopers attended the funeral and were at the grave all in uniform with their guns showing. Cecil and Leslie weren't present.
- October 23, 1933 Claire went to the hospital for an operation for appendicitis. Dr. Burke operated assisted by Tompkins and Dr. Jacobs. She is doing well and promise of a speedy recovery.
- November 10, 1933 Claire came home from the hospital this PM. Three other little girls, all from six to eight years old, have been operated on for appendicitis since Claire.
- November 19, 1933 Russell took Daisy and I for a ride and I got off at Hurleyville and took supper with Grace and Ai. Leonard came to supper later after Ai came back to relieve him at the bar.
- 1933 assessed valuation of the house and lot at 100 Carrier Street: \$6000.00; taxes: \$48.00
- March 1, 1934 I was taken with a pain in the back at 3PM and James Hutchinson brought me home. I laid on the couch 24 hours and then Phil Ruffle (Feb. 27, 1891-July 12, 1960; stores dept., elec. co.) sent three first aid men to carry me upstairs, Jas. Hutchinson, Freddie Wollmer and Bob Oestrich. We had Dr. Lee Tompkins. He strapped me up clear to my shoulder blades. I came downstairs six days later.
- March 10, 1934 After ten days at home laid up with lumbago I went at 7:30 PM and mailed two letters and came back by the electric office. Ma has quite a

fever and has been to bed for two days.

- May 24, 1934 Dolores, 20½ months old, said hello three times over telephone while her grandmother held her up.
- June 25, 1934 Russell got a second set of glasses of Dr. Nemerson of Fallsburgh, NY.
- July 9, 1934 Leslie came home from camp to stay. Was there, 1245<sup>th</sup> Co. CCC, Camp #65, Narrowsburgh, from December 8, 1933 to July 9, 1934, seven months.

*Leslie came from Mount Vernon with his family to live with Mamma and I as he was out of a job. Claire, Fred, and Dolores were with them. Donald wasn't even through of. He came after Dolores was nine years old. It was late fall and unemployment was at its height. Byron Grant (d. July 25, 1957 @ 75; pres. of Nat'l Bank; m. Louise Carpenter Nov. 4, 1914) said Leslie could go to the CC Camp at \$25 a month. That made one less to board. Leslie gave me \$18 per month all that winter. The County offered a sack of flour (50 lbs) for the needy and we accepted. I was working at the power plant for \$18 a week for 13 hours a night, 7 nights a week. The next spring I guaranteed his relief from the Camp. He took a job at Ambers Store for \$12 a week and he did some painting at the Lenape and also worked for Paul Beck (d. Feb. 4, 1955 @ 66). Then an opening came as a meter reader at the Electric Company. My son Russell was also a meter reader at the time. Andrew Ewing (d. Aug. 2, 1963 @ 65) was District Manager, and Ken Sprague claimed two brothers couldn't work the same job in our company so Ewing overruled Sprague's opinion and hired Leslie full time as a meter reader.*

- August 3, 1934 I got two front teeth filled by Dr. Harry Ordin at 5:00 PM.
- September 12, 1934 Fireman's Field Day today. The largest crowd we've had in Liberty since Otto Hillig came back from Denmark. Fireworks in the evening, the best we ever had.
- November 29, 1934 Thanksgiving Day. I took care of the fires in the boiler of the School Street garage today. I also put in some concrete in floor and walls. We had turkey and all the children and grandchildren were present. Also Miss Marie Coburg.
- December 25, 1934 The entire family was here for Christmas, including our grandchildren. We had a hemlock tree and plenty of presents for all and nuts and candies, a duck dinner and dressing. All of us seemed to be very happy. The three children have just got over the whooping cough. The older ones have been out of school about a month.
- February 5, 1935 The telephone company and electric company were changing their lines and couldn't get by the tree I transplanted forty-four years ago the second

of May, Arbor Day, whose name was Benjamin Franklin. Eugene Emmerson (d. March 1968; when he married Mabel Young on Oct. 4, 1930, the electric company office force gave them a skimmelton) and John Havey (b. Liberty Aug. 13, 1897; m. Louisa G. Ziemann, who d. April 14, 1932) broke the news to me at our employee meeting. I could have cried. I swore a curse on the whole batch of them, that one would pass out every ten years as did Cliff Edwards and Clyde Joyner. This tree was a tall spruce towering some forty feet high. Once before they cut the branches on one side for 6' to let two wires pass in the line. [Editor's note: Skimmelton seems to be a local word for the reception given for the bride and groom after their wedding. It probably derives from skimmington, the public ridicule of a henpecked husband or a shrewish wife but has taken on characteristics of a shivaree, a noisy mock-serenade to newlyweds, instead.]

- June 23, 1935 Mrs. Peck and Mrs. Hahn [Frank Hahn d. Feb. 27, 1956 @ 84; his wife, Susan Pierce, d. Oct. 26, 1952 @ 71; he was in real estate) took us and Leslie's family to Sackett Lake. Russell took his new car and Ma rode with him. We saw Earl Krum's bungalow, also Ernie Hoos (Mrs. Ernie J. Hoos was Henrietta Dohrman who d. Jan 10, 1936 @ 48) and Fred Hoos's place and the Heidt brothers' bungalow. [Charles Heidt d. May 3, 1940 @ about 50; Mrs. Melvin Heidt, a teacher for 26 years, d. Dec. 18, 1947 @ 54] We came back by way of Roscoe. This outing was in honor of Daisy and Fred's thirty-fourth wedding anniversary.
- July 8, 1935 Leslie took a job with the electric company as a meter reader. He has Chester Phillips's territory. (Chester L. Phillips was b. Ferndale Aug. 28, 1904 and was appointed postmaster of Ferndale in 1962; he married Lois Hutchinson)
- September 20, 1935 Russell and Freddie went up in Holger Horus's plane today.
- October 5, 1935 Alva Eronymous and wife, Fred Gorton and Daisy started for Oneonta and Mt. Vision. Saturday morning to Friday night we made 910 miles in Alva Eronymous's Buick without a single mishap. Our expense was about \$35.
- Fred later wrote: I never done much travelling as I worked for small wages but my foreman asked my wife and I to go to Niagara Falls. We started for Oneonta and to Mount Vision on Route 233 at Lowville. We left Clayton at 8:45 AM for Niagara Falls and arrived in Oswego at 11:10 AM Monday. We saw the lights shining at night on the cascade of the Falls, stayed all night at Niagara Village, started down the river 278' by steps viewing the bridge, and returned back to the street and went to the ledge and looked down 300' to the Devil's Cave. There were 375 stone steps and 357 from the water to

Devil's Cave. I ran up those 375 steps without stopping. Alvie or my wife took my picture from the ledge. I looked about the size of an ant. We returned through Ithaca where Uncle David Misner used to live. By chance we met Carl Osen in Child's Restaurant and at Geneva met Eddie Light and Harold P. Allen at the Electric Company office. Perhaps two years later Alvie and Delia took us again. He always paid for transportation with his car and I paid only our expenses.

- November 16, 1935 Leslie moved out after three years, three and a half months stay here on 100 Carrier Street to St. John Street, Grace Lynch's house back of the theater. Russell married Marie Coburg today at 2:30.
- January 1, 1936 Daisy and I were alone for the New Year's dinner for the first time since our marriage.
- June 24, 1936 Celebrated our 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at Leslie's home.
- July 27, 1936 Cecil and Florence and the twins, Alberta and Virginia, also the mother of Florence, stayed overnight. The girls are thirteen years old.
- September 17, 1936 Floyd and Alice came here to visit us in honor of our birthday.
- October 10, 1936 Dolores, four years old, stayed all night away from her parents for the first time.
- October 21, 1936 Aunt Doll died today, aged eighty-three years, ten months, ten days. Walt Misner is her last surviving son.
- November 28, 1936 Russell fell down half the steps in front of our house and broke a pint of raspberries and a plate containing a piece of mince pie. Pa Gorton took a library book over to Nelson Krum's and snow covered the ice. He fell on the driveway and hurt a rib on the left side with feet in the air.
- December 7, 1936 I came downstairs December 6 at 5PM for the first time since Monday night November 30. I had Dr. Dem Payne. He said one rib cracked.
- May 10, 1937 Daisy and I went to church, taking Dolores with us, and then went to Leslie's, took dinner, and then Catherine and Ma and I went to the .
- July 7, 1937 I took Leslie's bicycle to Harold Weyrauch (d. Feb. 15, 1958 @ 71; m. Cleva Tanner) to fix the crank next to the pedal and then to 15 St. John Street. Freddie took it out and gave Danny Harley a ride only to break his arm, both bones an inch and a half below the elbow.

- July 11, 1937 Leonard Farquhar took Grace, his mother, and Daisy and I to Mt. Vision to attend the funeral of Alice's daughter Hazel Fields. I saw Bert Gorton while there. He was only a small boy when he left Liberty. We also met Mr. and Mrs. Robins, friends of Floyd's, at the funeral. We went by way of Deposit but came back by way of Beaver Brook. Floyd has lost fifteen pounds and looks quite miserable. Alice looks quite good but complains of poor health. They have a nice field of potatoes and oats. We took dinner in Deposit.
- July 12, 1937 Claire was operated on for tonsils and Dolores has the measles. She is very sad. Mamma stayed with Dolores all afternoon and we took supper with them.
- August 7, 1937 Osmer and Grace spent the afternnon and took supper here. Osmer is very thin and hasn't been working for some time.
- September 15, 1937 We started at 2:30 from our home, heading for my twin brother's home at Mt. Vision [Editor's note: this was the second vacation trip with Alva and Delia Eronymous. When they arrived there they picked raspberries and had cream on them.]
- September 16,1937 We stayed around Floyd's all day expecting to go to the Morris Fair but backed out.
- September 17, 1937 Was our birthday, fifty-nine years. We took a hooker of rye whiskey before eating breakfast.(Alvie also hooked up one.) Arrived at Clayton at 8:00 PM. (Since it rained that evening, I went out and got some post cards.)
- September 18, 1937 We took a large pleasure boat ride from Clayton to Kingston, Canada (at the noon hour). We got back at 5:30. (The boat had a capacity of 120 persons and 26 others took the trip with us. We ate turkey dinner at the American Hotel in Canada. We hired a bus and driver and went sight seeing. We saw many gray stone buildings and the prison. On the return trip we had 36 passengers aboard and went on the 85 mile trip thru the Islands back by way of Alexandria Bay. We stopped at Heart Island Bolt Castle landing. We went along a board walk and slat fence. When we got back from the trip) after supper we went to the theater. The play was "Oh, Doctor," the race of a railroad against a fleet of trucks taking aero-planes to the Pacific Coast. The trucks won.
- September 19, 1937 Arrived at Plattsburgh at supper time. Spent the evening with Mr. Leuder, a former employee. We had a highball at Leuder's place and he brought us back at midnight. (At 10 AM we started toward Alexandria Bay and

passed the St. Lawrence State Hospital and saw a large elevator across the river. We saw the dock at Alexandria Bay and next Ogdensburg at Hammond. We arrived at Plattsburg at supper time, stayed at Mrs. Wilson Tourists.)

- September 20, 1937 (Leuder took Alva and I around the gas plant and electric steam plant it using both 40 and 60 cycles.) Leaving Plattsburgh we went through Ausable Chasm at Elizabethtown to Lake Placid and Saranac Lake. Stayed all night at Tupper Lake. (Here we got some branches off the fir trees with seeds on them. We passed Long Lake before we came to Newcomb.)
- September 22, 1937 We went through Lake George to Albany. At Albany we went through the first floor of Montgomery Ward's eight story building. Liberty at 2:30 PM Wednesday. Went to work at 4:00 the same night. 842 miles and 85 miles on water=927 miles. Fifty-one gallons of gas at 21¢ a gallon=\$10.71. (Alvie paid for all the gas on the trip as he furnished the car and Daisy and I paid half the expenses of food and lodging.)
- November 10, 1937 Russell took us to Albany today on business of his own to see the Burrows Co. about a position. Daisy and I went around the Capitol building and then around to the car parked two blocks down.
- November 25, 1937 Leslie, Catherine, Claire, Freddie, Dolores, Russell, and Marie took Thanksgiving dinner with their parents.
- January 1, 1938 Daisy and I are alone all day this New Year's Day.
- January 3, 1938 Ma and I took supper with Marie this evening.
- April 18, 1938 Floyd and Alice took us to Middletown and we saw Leslie [his brother Leslie, not his son]. He seems to have his own home. We took dinner at a lunchwagon. [Editor's Note: Leslie had the hardest luck of any of the siblings except perhaps Janette. He had a railroad accident and was laid up three years. He had a cataract and one eye removed. He went into a home at Slate Hill later in life but ran away to Warwick to a friend's house.]
- November 11, 1938 Russell moved into our apartment.
- November 13, 1938 Marie brought home a little yellow kitten.

Fred was called to serve on the Grand Jury in Monticello for the first time on January 3, 1939. The first women ever to serve on a Grand Jury in Sullivan County were on that one, Mabel Richmond and Ruth Williams. Russell drove Fred back and forth several times during the eight days of jury duty. Fred was paid \$31.20. In the course of the next ten years, after which he was



too old to be called, Fred served seven more times as a grand juror.

- April 1, 1939 Coaching in Liberty. Davis [electric company employee Kenneth H. Davis (Sept. 22, 1899-July 24, 1959); he died at the electric company office on Wierk Ave.] and I rode a float designed by him to represent electric appliances.
- April 30, 1939 Ma and I went to church and then to Leslie's home for dinner and supper. Russell came and took us home to find Snook the cat had a broken hind leg. Russ took to him to Dr. Freer's.
- June 14, 1939 Daisy and Russell went to Fallsburgh this evening, each to get a new pair of glasses.
- August 25, 1939 Russell and Marie went to their camp to stay over Sunday.
- September 1, 1939 The Germans shelled Poland. I picked the pears and finished the fence around the Red Astican tree, 35' square, and made a gate.
- September 17, 1939 Ma and I celebrated my sixty-first birthday at Leslie's home on Winthrop Avenue.
- September 22, 1939 Russell took Leslie and the three children, Ma and I to his camp at White Lake. We stayed all day and went boating.

In October, Fred went to the World's Fair in New York. He went alone, by train, and stayed in a rooming house.

*I spent three days away. Had a ride on the new Ford. Had to go up thirty steps for the ride. I hit an Italian man's foot in going up. He threatened to slug me. I also went up someother stairs and bumped against an old maid. She accused me of getting a little close to her. In coming home I asked a man what I should have said to her. He said I should have said, "Are you one of those women I poisoned and still alive?" I also saw all the old engines of years ago. I had a ride on the little string of cars that took us all around the Fair Grounds. On Sunday I attended the First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica. I left the Roepke residence October 16<sup>th</sup>. The son directed me where to get off the train for Hotel Dixie. I arrived home 1:20PM. Cost of trip, \$19.06.*

- January 1, 1940 Russell and Stan McChesney and I went to Hurleyville to fish with tip-ups on the Hornbeck farm. No luck.
- January 30, 1940 Franklin D. Roosevelt's birthday. Also Hitler in power in Germany and Janet Comfort's fourth birthday.
- February 5, 1940 Dr. Payne came to see Ma. She suffered all night from gallstones.

- February 26, 1940 I hung out clothes for Mamma today and she went to a party at E. L. Cooper's in the evening. Got home 12:30 AM.
- April 14, 1940 Installation of trustees at Presbyterian Church: George Garvin Birmingham, Albert Theodore Decker, Fred Gorton, William Harry Tompkins. Also Deacon Walter Bennett Lancashire (Walter Lancashire d. Mar. 15, 1943 @ 37) and Elder Paul Herbert Allen (Paul Allen m. Anna Gerow).
- April 22, 1940 I went to the movies, title "Rebecca," and Ma went to a party given by Mrs. Chester Price.
- August 29, 1940 Mr. Sinowitz from the Sullivan County Plumbing and Supply Company came her to measure up the five room cottage preparatory to putting in heat.
- October 5, 1940 Leslie's family and Daisy went to the World's Fair. Left here 6:20 AM. Got home ten of 3 AM.
- October 17, 1940 Mr. Haas and the elders and deacons and trustees had a banquet turkey supper at the Lenape to discuss one day a week for a religious service for the public school.
- October 19, 1940 Ai Gorton broke his wrist at Grace's home after the grand opening of the Silver Dollar Hotel of Jake Rexford and Leonard Farquhar.
- October 28, 1940 Daisy received an air mail letter from Russell today from Lansing, Michigan.
- November 21, 1940 Celebrated Roosevelt Thanksgiving today. Russell and Marie and Leslie, Catherine, Claire, Freddie, and Dolores.
- December 23, 1940 I took dinner with Leslie and we went to the xmas program in the Catholic Church and Candlelight service at 5PM in our church.
- March 29, 1941 Leslie Gorton and family moved in our cottage today.
- September 9, 1941 Born to Leslie and Catherine Gorton their fourth child, a son, Donald Richard Gorton.
- September 14, 1941 I went to the hospital to see Catherine and our new grandson. Dolores fell off Berna Deinhart's bicycle and got a black eye and knee.
- October 25, 1941 Leslie took Russell's car and took Ma, Catherine, Freddie and Dolores to

- Middletown. Ma bought a desk for me.
- December 2, 1941 Dick Todd and wife went to Boston today with Russell and Marie.
- December 7, 1941 Japan declared war on U.S. Bombed the Hawaiian Islands.
- January 2, 1942 Bought Defense Savings Bond.
- January 26, 1942 Russell starts for Walden this AM with a new Chevrolet truck.
- January 30, 1942 Russell took physical.
- April 4, 1942 Bought another Defense Bond. \$18.95.
- April 27, 1942 Jackey Stapleton was killed as the Sturtevant was torpedoed off the coast of Florida Monday. 1900 ton destroyer.
- Editor's note: In the summer of 1942, Russell reported to Camp Upham, then to Atlantic City for officer's training. Fred, Leslie and Freddie kept busy at home fixing up the cottage.
- September 11, 1942 Our first air raid alarm in Liberty.
- January 14, 1943 Bill Keller took me to Hurleyville to see Grace and Ai. She met me at the door. Grace had an operation some weeks ago, her fourth. Ai has his forefinger on the left hand off. It looks bad.
- January 19, 1943 Russell started from Tampa, Florida to Meridian, Mississippi,
- February 19, 1943 Les Coburg and Katie were here today. Also Dick Todd and wife.  
[Editor's note: Les Coburg was Marie's father. Katie Hornbeck Coburg was his second wife but also the sister of his first wife, Marie's mother, who died in childbirth. Katie and her parents, M.G. and Ella Hornbeck, raised Marie on the Hornbeck farm in Hurleyville. Because of Ella's refusal to approve of Katie marrying her sister's widower, Katie and Les waited until after Ella's death to marry. Dick and Anna Mauer Todd were close friends of Russ and Marie's. Anna Todd was the daughter of Frank (d. Mar. 22, 1941 @ 59; brother of Will Mauer) and Bertha Mauer.]
- February 20, 1943 Marie started for the city this AM to go Monday for Meridian, Mississippi to be with Russell. We shipped her new trunk today.
- March 1, 1943 Les and Katie Coburg called on us this evening. We had a nice visit. Marie and Russell are at Meridian.

- March 28, 1943 Dolores and I went to see the railroad train wreck. Fourteen cars down the bank halfway between Ferndale Depot and Bull's Cut.
- April 4, 1943 Russell and Marie came back from Meridian at 3PM today. It is also his thirty-third birthday. We all were pleased. In the evening fifteen people were here: Bill Keller and wife, Les and Katie and M.H. Hornbeck, Aunt Ida, Dick Todd, Leslie, Catherine, Claire and Dolores, Russ and Marie and Ma and Pa. {M.H.Hornbeck was Marie's uncle; Aunt Ida was probably Ida Hornbeck Crosby, her aunt.}
- We had a blackout both May 4 and May 10, each for one hour.
- August 6, 1943 W. R. Gorton from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant.
- August 24, 1943 I started to wear my new bifocal glasses today. \$25.00.
- September 1, 1943 The Germans have issued military law in Denmark and killed 2000 people. King Christian is under arrest.
- October 6, 1943 Russell and Marie drove home from Columbia, South Carolina, arrived here 2 AM and got us out of bed.
- October 10, 1943 We had our Thanksgiving dinner today as Russell and Marie are home for eight days.
- February 16, 1944 Russell and Marie came home from South Carolina today and left their car with Les Coburg. Quite a surprise.
- March 21, 1944 Last letter written by Russell before he went across.
- May 17, 1944 I went to Jeffersonville to Mrs. Lucky's auction with Frederick Wollmer and Don Westbrook. I bought 29 worthless records and a nice sugar bowl. I trimmed Mrs. Atkins' little trees in the evening, also my two apple trees.
- June 4, 1944 Marie came home Friday evening June 2<sup>nd</sup> and returned to NYC Sunday PM. Agnes Slaver took her to the bus station. [Editor's note: Marie took a job demonstrating cosmetics while Russ was stationed in Europe during World War II. She traveled all over the country. Agnes Slaver was the daughter of John (d. April 21, 1958 @ 75) and Agnes Prothero Slaver (d. Nov. 24, 1958 @ 74); she later married Donald Baker.]
- August 10, 1944 Marie came home from Binghamton this afternoon and the Coburgs came up to spend the evening.

- August 16, 1944 Leslie got through with the electric company today.
- September 3, 1944 Les Coburg and Katie came up today and took Marie to Middletown to catch the train back to New York.
- September 17, 1944 I stayed home this forenoon to help Leslie and family put their furniture on the truck. They departed at 12 noon for Stratford, Connecticut. [Editor's note: This marked the beginning of the migration of Fred's branch of the Gortons out of Liberty. Claire and Fred married and had twelve children each, many of whom still live in the Stratford/Bridgeport/Trumbull area. At this writing, in February 2005, Catherine Gorton is over 100 years old and still going strong in her own home in Trumbull, Connecticut.]
- November 27, 1944 The past grands club met at Daisy's home and thirteen members came. We washed the dishes and retired at 1:30 AM.
- December 11, 1944 Mrs. Cooper had her party this evening. Seventeen ladies were present. Jimmie and I had to walk our wives home on account of ice coming on in the evening.
- December 23, 1944 Leslie and entire family came on the train from Stratford, Connecticut to Liberty.
- January 12, 1945 I got a raise in pay from 88¢ to 93½¢ per hour and we got retroactive back to April 1, 1944.
- May 13, 1945 Claire came home from Bridgeport after the prom was over. She has a fiery red evening gown. Brought Grandma a box of candy.
- August 15, 1945 President Truman declared a two day holiday on account of close of war with the Japs.
- November 5, 1945 Marie came home after more than a year.
- November 13, 1945 Russell phoned from Camp Shanks this PM. He arrived there this morning and will go to Fort Dix soon.
- November 18, 1945 Russell came home from overseas this evening on the bus. 7:05 PM. I met him there.
- December 25, 1945 Ma and I went to Les Coburg's home [the Hornbeck farm in Hurleyville] for turkey dinner. Russell drove Les's car from here. We caught two pickerel and returned before dark. Anson Bates and wife and Doris from Bridgeport were there, also the Crosbys. [Anson Bates's wife was Luella

Hornbeck, another of Marie's aunts and Doris was their daughter.]

- April 9, 1946 Took bus for Middletown. Bus got on fire at Harris. Got to Middletown 10:15 AM. Took dinner with Mrs. Carpenter and supper with Leslie and stayed all night with the Carpenters. Elizabeth Ann Smith took me back to Middletown and I went to NYC to Barnum & Bailey's show Thursday, April 11. I took the 7:00 train from Grand Central Station to Bridgeport to see Leslie and came back with Anson Bates to Liberty. Arrived home 10:20 PM April 12.
- September 17, 1946 Daisy gave me a Bulova watch, fifteen jewels, for my sixty-eighth birthday. Very sweet of her.
- October 26, 1946 Les and Katie called this evening to get three suits to send to Marie in Binghamton. She and Russ are there for a month.
- October 31, 1946 Retired. At 8 PM tonight the employees of the electric corp. gave me a little party in the Lineman's Room. About forty were present. They gave me an electric drill and asked for a speech. The twenty-nine years service ended October 16, 1946.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE SENIOR CITIZEN

When he retired it never occurred to Fred Gorton to stop working and take it easy. He simply directed all of his efforts into non-company jobs. He took on small construction and woodworking jobs for other people, continued to rent out and maintain his cottage and apartment, made improvements on his own house, and kept up his gardening. He also developed a number of new interests. He collected picture postcards of churches, propagated perennials, reread the Bible not once but many times, and began to dabble in genealogy. He visited and was visited by his sons and grandchildren too many times to make mention of and in later life frequently served as a babysitter for his tenants.

From the diaries:

- November 1, 1946 I took off all the window screens today and washed the windows. Marie and Russell came home from Binghamton.
- November 15, 1946 Returned from Leslie's home in Bridgeport by Anson Bates's car. At Rock Hill we had soup at Mr. Bates's sister's place.
- November 18, 1946 Started working for Francis Kortright at Al Tuttle's cellar. Dug mud the first day.

- November 26, 1946 Finished the cement job for Kortright. 53 hours all told.
- December 12, 1946 Built cabinet in kitchen 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ x24" with panel door and drawer, even with range top.
- December 17, 1946 Russell broke out with chicken pox.
- December 18, 1946 Started working for John Somers today.
- December 26, 1946 Worked for Bob Oestrick using wood filler and high varnish. Fourteen hours. \$14, in his new house on Winslow Place. Dolores came to visit us from Bridgeport. I have \$25.00 worth of stakes on hand now.
- January 20, 1947 Stakes on hand: 8 bunches (25) @ 6¢, \$12.00, Sherwood. 20 bunches (30) @ 3¢ \$18.00, N.Y. S.E.&Gas.
- February 4, 1947 I put two base recepticles in Luther Dowe's (Luther "Yank" Dowe d. Nov. 1948 @ 46) house today.
- February 24, 1947 Attended Clark Gorton's funeral. Grace was there, also Mabel Stoddard (May 23, 1880-Jan. 22, 1961), Jennie Stoddard, Celia and Will Ratcliff, two Harris boys, Dewey Carr, Mrs. Aaron Stanton, Cora Randall. Clark was born May 20, 1868, died Feb. 22, 1947. Brookside , Harris, New York.
- March 1, 1947 I was putting in a base recepticle at Hollands, Creamery Road, and I fell off the garret stairs and hurt my head, scraped both elbows and turned my left ankle. Two fingers on the right hand were quite stiff.
- March 9, 1947 Alice, Floyd's wife, died today.
- March 19, 1947 I got my new glasses today. \$22.00.
- April 18, 1947 Floyd came to call on us today, stayed two hours. I was painting Marie's living room.
- May 15, 1947 Ai Gorton died this afternoon 2:25 o'clock at Monticello Hospital, aged seventy years.
- May 27, 1947 Drawed maure from Dick Smith's and loaded two trucks and spread for him.

- June 13, 1947 Ma went to the Campbell Inn with the Clarks, Aunt Ida, and Mrs. Ed Bengel to the D.A. R. meeting. (I don't think this could be Ida Hornbeck Crosby, Marie's Aunt Ida, but the only other Ida I find in the family is Ida Grant Steenrod, wife of Daisy's half brother, Levi Tucker Steenrod, who was nineteen years older than she was. Ida Steenrod died in 1955.)
- August 18, 1947 Les Cooper and Ed Steenrod and I to White Sulphur Springs and Briscoe to see the damage done by the flood Saturday night.
- September 5, 1947 I picked 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> bushels of pears from our tree next to the garage tonight. Gave ½ bu. to Cooper and ½ bu. to Coburg and ½ bu. to Gladys Blade. They are \$1.90 per ½ bu. at the Victory Store.
- September 8, 1947 Brother Leslie came to see us today and stayed to dinner and supper and returned to Middletown on the 8:30 Short Line bus. I took time to be bearer for Mrs. Monroe. [Lydia A. (Mrs. Edwin C.) Monroe, Lake St., d. Sept. 3, 1947 @ 90 years 5 days.]
- September 17, 1947 Floyd came and got Daisy and I and took us to Hurleyville to celebrate our birthday. Leslie and Grace were there too. We had a good dinner and Floyd brought us home at 4:30.
- September 22, 1947 Ma did her first washing with the new Bendix washer. Marie did hers after supper.
- September 29, 1947 Bought new pair shoes. Cost \$6.95. Ma had Dr. Payne come today at 5PM. Case of gall stones.
- October 25, 1947 Russell and Marie became parents of a daughter between 11 and 12 AM today. They named her Kathy Lynn. [Editor's Note: ME!!!]
- November 8, 1947 Mrs. Bill Keller brought the baby from the hospital this AM. Kathy Lynn. Put her right in Mama's lap to hold. She is a very sweet baby.
- December 25, 1947 We had our Christmas presents at Russell's apartment Christmas Eve and Russ and Marie took Kathy to Hurleyville. Ma and I took dinner alone, but finished up with telephoning to each of Leslie's family. A very happy ending.
- January 15, 1948 Russ telephoned Leslie to let him know how Ma is. Ma slept this AM until 10:45. Marie gave Ma a shot of vitamins this PM.



- January 17, 1948 Leslie and Dolores came to see us this PM Arrived about 4:45. Dolores just loves the baby.
- February 7, 1948 I had a job of baby sitter this evening from 9PM to 1:30 AM. Kathy slept right through without waking at all.
- February 12, 1948 The old yellow cat died today. Bootsey. Eight years old.
- February 14, 1948 We got the automatic heat on this AM.
- March 27, 1948 Russ received Soldier's Bonus of \$250.00. Bought three items—black inlaid linoleum for kitchen, 9x12 rug for living room, and play pen for Kathy.
- April 11, 1948 Floyd came from Grace's today, took dinner and went back to Hurleyville 4:45 PM. He is real well.
- April 27, 1948 Hotel Carleton, Monticello. I saw my first television program, a ball game by New York. Score 3-1. The jury had a robbery case. A seventy year old man was held up by a German Luger toy pistol. Took \$47.61.
- April 30, 1948 Mr. Herbert Boxberger finished moving out at 6:30 PM today.
- May 16, 1948 Warren T. Myer and family moved in the cottage this A.M.  
[Editor's note: This was Bud and Julie Myer and their son Peter, who was Kathy's age.]
- May 19, 1948 Signed card for Quarter Century Club. [Editor's Note: The Quarter Century Club is comprised of New York State Electric & Gas employees who worked for the company for 25 years or more.]
- July 21, 1948 I came in contact with the buzz saw and it cut my left thumb quite deep but I mowed for Les Cooper 1 hour 15 minutes this PM. 98°.
- August 9, 1948 Dr. Ordin pulled eight teeth this AM.
- August 28, 1948 I went to Binghamton to the Quarter Century Club clambake with John Havey, Blake Peck, Ken Sprague. Drove the company car. We also went through the Westover Electric Plant.
- September 5, 1948 Russell took Ma and I to Hurleyville this PM. Marie and Kathy and Skippy sat in the back seat with me in his new Chevrolet car. [Editor's note: Skippy was a fox terrier acquired by Russ and

Marie before Kathy's birth. Marie nursed him through two strokes and he lived to be 18.]

- September 30, 1948 I went to the Liberty Republican Club 8PM at Hotel Lenape. Went with Ralph Voorhees (Feb. 22. 1903-Aug. 13, 1967) and returned with Cooper.
- October 8, 1948 I got back from Bridgeport tonight 8:15PM. Russell came to Danbury to get me as I missed the bus.
- October 18, 1948 I got my new teeth. \$65.00.
- November 10, 1948 I started the job of putting in mica pellets for insulation in our garret. We bought 40 bags. \$54.
- December 23, 1948 Ma went upstairs to see Kathy's Christmas tree tonight, the first time in a year.
- February 9, 1949 I trimmed three apple trees today. Roy Carpenter brought three transformer crates for stakes.
- February 23, 1949 Eleanor Gross won \$100 at the theater tonight. Bengel and Fred Gorton were judges.
- April 21, 1949 I finished our garage this PM. Total cost for material for roof, sides, and paint was \$63.60.
- May 30, 1949 I planted cucumbers today. Les Cooper called at supper time. I planted corn and beans and took out one row of beans killed by frost. Benton's goat got loose and came over in my garden.
- June 10, 1949 IBEW had election of officers. Inemann corresponding secretary, Cyrus Blade(May 24, 1903-Sept. 2, 1960; m. Gladys Muhlig Sept. 19, 1931) financial secretary, Fred Gorton treasurer and Herman Berberich president.
- July 17, 1949 I didn't go to church this Sunday but I heard a good sermon by the Baptist minister Rev. Bailey over WVOS. Russell and Marie and Kathy went to Hurleyville but I stayed with Daisy.
- August 4, 1949 We had our first corn today. I also sold corn, cucumbers, and tomatoes.
- August 27, 1949 The investigators came to call on me concerning twins. They spent

about an hour here.

- September 10, 1949 I hacked my left foot with the point of the corn cutter while cutting off roots from corn stalks.
- September 21, 1949 Floyd came and took me to George Jr.'s and I stayed all night there. Next day he took me to see George and Martha and Friday we came back to Oneonta to Laverne Norris's home where he rooms. To the opera at night. I stayed all night there and Saturday back to George Sr.'s. I stayed over Sunday and Monday AM Floyd came and took me to Oneonta to see Frank Doughty (Nov. 3, 1898-1968) and Andrew Ewing and L.K.Byron. We came through Callicoon and Jeffersonville and home without a mishap. I sent the pogo stick back to George Jr.
- October 23, 1949 Russell and Marie came to Bridgeport and we came home today. Ma stood the trip very well.
- November 10, 1949 Katie Coburg washed and stretched Ma's curtains off the dining room. Myrtle Sager and Catherine brought me home from the movies tonight. I got a telephone message from Leslie to paint for him.
- November 16, 1949 I came home from Leslie's after painting an apartment in Bridgeport.
- December 4, 1949 I rode to church with Les Coburg and came back with Nelson Krum. Les and Katie brought Kathy up to see us as Marie and Russ are on their way to Miami.
- March 14, 1950 Train wreck at Strongtown Crossing, between the Overshot Bridge and the old trestle. Ten cars derailed. Mrs. Myer took Marie and Kathy and Peter and myself.
- May 28, 1950 Dr. Stamm called on Ma today. She has a bad heart spell and her leg was numb as well as her fingers and lips.
- June 6, 1950 I received a letter from Osmer this noon saying my brother Leslie needs help.
- July 25, 1950 Charles V. Mauer came out in our garden for me to sign two insurance checks in favor of the trustees of the Presbyterian Church to pay for lightning damage to the church steeple which is now repaired.

- August 30, 1950 Freddie came from Bridgeport to visit us and went home August 31<sup>st</sup>. He volunteered for Army service and will go to San Antonio, Texas.
- September 21, 1950 I finished putting in the walls of Marie's laundry room in the cellar. I started the job September 1. Put in cement in three places to cover drain tile and put the heater in over the door.
- September 27, 1950 The first Bank Night after the summer season. \$825 total. No one won. The new manager participated. I was judge.
- January 3, 1951 Eugene Frederick Gorton came with Anita Grillo to visit us on the 7:10 bus. We had supper in our rooms with Russell and Marie and Kathy.
- March 13, 1951 Three men came and put up the antenna on our house this morning and brought a new television set.
- May 1, 1951 Norman Waite moved into the rear cottage.
- May 17, 1951 I worked all afternoon for Russell at 134 Lincoln Place. Uncrated 80 gallon water heater, mowed lawn and took off valves.
- [On May 24, 1951, Fred's cousin Celia Hall Ratcliff died at the age of 77. She left eight of her cousins \$1858.44 and her husband half her estate, which was eight times what the cousins got. Will, her husband, remarked after the estate was divided, "the hardest thing I ever did was to sign those eight checks of Celia's money."]
- June 24, 1951 Russell and Marie moved today. M. H. Hornbeck and Les Coburg moved them.
- June 25, 1951 Ed Steenrod and wife Mary came to visit us at 2PM and stayed until 10:30 PM. Took supper with us, also Russ, Marie and Kathy. I called on Grace this PM when Russ went after Kathy at Hurleyville.
- July 14, 1951 Leslie, Catherine, Dolores and Donald arrived here at 1:15 PM. Claire couldn't come, being on a nursing case. Freddie is in San Antonio. Russell and Marie and Kathy took supper with us and dinner the next day.
- September 19, 1951 I cleaned Russell's hen house to make a play house for Kathy.
- November 26, 1951 9:30 a son born to Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Frederick Gorton of San

Antonio, Texas. Leslie telephoned us at 8 PM on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

- January 5, 1952            It snowed 4" last night. Leslie, Catherine, Fred, Anita and baby Eugene Edward Gorton came from Stratford. Fred looks very nice in his Air Force uniform.
- August 27, 1952           Fred and Anita are parents of their second boy.
- September 8, 1952        Floyd took me to Alvie Eronymous's funeral and then to Ben Gerow's to see Fred and Will Wheeler and Angie.
- September 19, 1952       We bought green table and four chairs of Appliance and Furniture Inc. for \$83.75. Fred, Anita, Eugene and Bryan, also Nancy Grillo, came 3:30 PM and returned home at 8:50 PM.
- October 3, 1952           I got my raise of \$7.10 in the social security, from \$56.80 to \$63.90.
- October 7, 1952           I listened to the ballgame over the radio this PM, 1:20 to 4:00. New York Yankees 4, Brooklyn Dodgers 2. The Yanks' 4<sup>th</sup> Pennant in a row. Fred Bengel's birthday. [Editor's Note: Fred Bengel, a long-time friend, had moved into the apartment when Russ and Marie moved out. As for the baseball, Fred was not really much of a fan. Shortly before "dem bums" left Brooklyn, when they were again playing the Yankees, Kathy asked him if he was a Yankee or a Dodger. His reply was that his mother had always told him he was a Yankee because he was from the North. Kathy currently roots for the Red Sox . . . and for any team playing against the Yankees.]
- December 16, 1952        I set up the four deer and Santa and Russell installed two spotlights in the evening. Bengel assisted me next day. (I sought to have an exhibit with moving parts to out-do my neighbors. I owned an electric washer. Its center moved up and down thirty times a minute. I attached a small strong string through a pulley in the ceiling across to another pulley to a teeter board going up and down ten inches. This board had Santa Claus and deer twenty inches high on my front porch.)
- December 27, 1952        I took the washer in at 5PM after more than a week to run the deer on the front porch. Four deer and the sleigh with Santa riding with a red cap with white tassel on made by Daisy.
- January 21, 1953           Alvin Stickle cut out 1<sup>st</sup> camel. I painted same white. [Editor's

note: I assume this was one of the camels for the next year's Christmas display.]

- March 26, 1953 We got a phone message from Leslie saying Claire was married Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> of March.
- April 13, 1953 We received the double 12s dominos from Leslie today and Ma beat me three games.
- June 2, 1953 Queen Elizabeth's coronation on the television was flown over to Boston and we got it at 4:20 PM. Mrs. Atkins and Mrs. Roggenkamp [Freda (Mrs. John) Roggencamp d. Dec. 15, 1968 @82; John Roggencamp d. May 24, 1955 @ 72. They lived on Carrier St.] sat through the crowning of the Queen.
- October 16, 1953 Fred and Anita are parents of a baby boy, 8 lbs. 7 oz., Glenn Allen, born on Friday.



- December 18, 1953 I got the camels and three wise men out and running. (I invented a scheme run by a half horse power moter, a three inch pulley on a twenty-two inch diameter wheel ran a belt to a ten inch steel wheel. A twelve inch long pipe ran across a plank to carry the exhibit without any interference. It made the camels jig up and down twenty times a minute. Christmas Eve I saw eleven cars slack up or stop.)
- April 26, 1954 The guinea pig had three little ones.

- September 30, 1954 George Gorton died at 4AM. He lived at Harwick Seminary, would have been eighty October 3.
- October 21, 1954 Russ took me to see Osmer today and return. He is still in bed.
- January 16, 1955 The old farmhouse burned to the ground in the evening. Old Hickory.
- February 15, 1955 I got a black eye in the cellarway but didn't break my glasses.
- April 15, 1955 Fred and Anita became parents of their fourth child, a girl, 8AM. 7 lbs. 6 oz. Claire telephoned. Nancy Carol.
- September 10, 1955 The two boys and their families took dinner at the Presbyterian Church parlors. The Ever Ready Ladies put it on, including the great grandchildren and Barbara Smedley. [Editor's Note: Barbara was Les and Catherine Gorton's niece on the McKennon side.]
- June 11, 1956 Daisy's birthday. Callers were Russ and Marie and Kathy, Ophelia and Ann, Betty Mateer, Lu Grimm (Mrs. Fred B. Grimm; he d. April 24, 1951 @ 71; she d. Oct. 22, 1963 @ 84), May Nichols (Susan May Nichols d. June 5, 1967 @ 85), Fred Bengel. Mrs. Nichols brought angel food cake.
- June 25, 1956 We are still here on our 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. I did the washing this AM.
- July 21, 1956 Brother Leslie gets \$23.00 from welfare and \$49.00 social security.
- September 27, 1956 I walked to Ben Gerow's bridge, called on Angie. The contractors are making a road through Lake Ophelia.
- March 16, 1957 I got Uncle David's diary yesterday.
- November 27, 1957 Earl Farquhar and Elsie went to Leslie's funeral. Took me also. Middletown. Burial in Pine Hill . Grace Wood and three others attended.
- February 11, 1958 The ambulance took Ma to the hospital at 11:05 AM for xrays of the hip. Marie went with her.
- March 31, 1958 Jack Lavelle took me to Hurleyville for Katie's funeral. Thirty pieces of flowers. A large attendance. I stayed with Kathy.

[Author's note: Katie Coburg's funeral was held at the Hornbeck farm where she had lived all her life. Afterward her widower, Marie's father, came to live with Russ and Marie Gorton at 134 Lincoln Place and the farm, which was owned jointly by all of the Hornbeck siblings and Marie, was sold. A few years later it burned to the ground.]

- April 8, 1958 Dr. Payne called 11:10 AM. First time in two months. Ma skinned her heel.
- June 21, 1958 I waited on Ma every two hours all night and three times before breakfast today.
- June 22, 1958 Ma slept all night until 7AM. Three callers today—Russell, Cooper and Mrs. Atkins.
- June 29, 1958 Russ and Kathy called this Sunday afternoon. Peonies in full bloom.
- July 16, 1958 Leslie called from Stratford last night. Claire had a seven pound girl born at twelve noon. Ann Mary.
- July 21, 1958 I got a new subscription to Life Magazine yesterday.
- July 25, 1958 Dr. Payne called at 10:45 PM. Ma kept me awake all night yelling "Help! Daddy!"
- July 26, 1958 Twenty-six bedpans.
- July 31, 1958 Dr. Payne cut the skin off Ma's boil on her neck while I watched.
- August 2, 1958 Russell and Marie called last evening. Marie put up kitchen curtains and they put a board under the springs of Ma's bed.
- August 10, 1958 Leslie, Catherine and Dolores came last evening 9PM. I went to church today for the first time in nine weeks. Catherine took over.
- August 20, 1958 I certainly had a night of it. Bed pan every hour, 2 to 7 AM.
- August 21, 1958 I called up Mildred Barrerer.
- August 22, 1958 Mildred Barrerer called and we bargained with her to care for Daisy.



- August 23, 1958 Claire and baby and Leslie came at noon and Catherine returned with them at 5:30 PM Saturday.
- August 24, 1958 Mildred Barrerer came at 7 PM.
- August 30, 1958 Daisy died at 10:30 PM tonight.
- September 2, 1958 Daisy's funeral was held 2 PM at Spencer Ramsay's funeral home. Rev. Orson Rice minister served in Rev. Marshall Smith's place as he was away.
- September 11, 1958 Leslie called on telephone last night to see if I could come and visit them. Received Dr. Franz J. Kallerman concerning twins.

Many years later, Fred wrote this:

*In the daytime, after my wife had died three weeks ago of diabetes, not able to stand, she stood in my dream all dressed in white and in robust health. I warned her she would fall down. She came toward me and disappeared at my feet.*

- October 9, 1958 I pasted pictures in the album all day.
- December 7, 1958 I sold the Christmas exhibit—motor, three camels, Joseph and Mary and the child Jesus.
- December 12, 1958 I wrote up thirty pages of my life's story, "The Plodder," today.
- January 13, 1959 Peter Avery and wife and two children came to look at the cottage to rent it.
- April 28, 1959 Yesterday I spent most of the day writing up the history of electricity in Liberty.
- June 8, 1959 Russell took Edna Stapleton and I to Westwood to Osmer's funeral.
- June 16, 1959 I gave Mr. Leuder the write-up of Electricity in Liberty, N.Y. to be typed. 12 copies. [Editor's Note: At this time I have not found a copy of this in Fred's papers. I've seen one at some point, though, so it may yet turn up.]
- July 30, 1959 Les Coburg took me to his camp in Ulster County, about 25 miles away. A pond in front and a tree with a complete knot near the outhouse. [Editor's Note: This was called Red Horse Camp and was a hunting camp owned by several Hurleyville men including

Les Coburg, his brother Henry, and some of the Durlands. If anyone knows exactly where it was located I'd love to hear from them. A painting I did as a teenager, based on a photo of the camp, was used as the cover for the ebook version of my romance novel *Cloud Castles* and the setting was also used as the model for the camp in my romance novel *Sleepwalking Beauty*. You can take a look at [www.kathylynnemerson.com](http://www.kathylynnemerson.com)]

- August 27, 1959                      The Liberty Gazette will print the Gorton genealogy for \$40.00.
- September 11, 1959                I received fifty copies of the "Genealogy of the Gortons and Steenrods" today. Printed by the Liberty Gazette. [Editor's Note: Strictly speaking, this was not a genealogy. It is an eight page pamphlet consisting of lists of relatives and their children, in no particular order. Still, for someone with only an eighth grade education, Fred didn't do too badly. He wrote to a number of relatives to gather the information and is, in general, accurate. He did made one incorrect assumption, however, stating that the first John Gorton to arrive in Sullivan County, in the 1790s, was born in England. In fact, the first Gorton in this country was John's ancestor, Samuella Gorton, back in the 1630s. After being thrown out of just about every other colony then existing in New England, Samuella ended up founding what is now Warwick, RI and his own religion, the Gortonists. The sect died out after about 100 years.]
- September 17, 1959                Floyd arrived at 10:30 AM. We went to see Ratcliff at Liberty Loomis Hospital, then to White Sulphur Springs. To supper with Russell. Had birthday cake.
- September 22, 1959                I mailed out twenty Gorton genealogies.
- October 31, 1959                    I telephoned Margaret Ratcliff concerning Uncle David's diary.
- May 10, 1960                        The ambulance took Russell to the Liberty Loomis Hospital this PM.
- May 12, 1960                        Mary Cooper and Gertie took me to Liberty Loomis Hospital. I called on Clair Mitchell (b. Monticello Dec. 8, 1900; electric company employee), Charles Matsinger (b. June 21, 1896; electric company employee) and Russell.
- June 25, 1960                        Dr. Ordin took out five teeth June 24. I still have wisdom teeth in under jaw.

July 5, 1960 I delivered two little cradles today to Betty Hamilton.

September 14, 1960 Floyd arrived at one o'clock the 13<sup>th</sup>. Wrote answer to Dr. Kallerman.

October 12, 1960 Bootsey arrived. Les Coburg brought the kitten. Marie and Kathy came too. Four white feet and a white nose.

November 20, 1960 The kitten bit me again tonight at Russell's home.

November 24, 1960 I took Thanksgiving with Russell, Marie, and Kathy. We had turkey. Bootsey went along too.

February 13, 1961 I got valentine of Ophelia.

March 30, 1961 Russell took me to Candlelight service. Kathy and eight other girls joined the church. One child was baptised.

April 6, 1961 The kitten brought in a live ground mole and lost it. I saw it run past my bed at 6AM.

April 30, 1961 Bengel fell on the cellar stairs, cut his eye and hand. Dr. Grant came on Sunday.

May 2, 1961 Bengel came back from Dr. Grant's. Looked as if he had been in a fight.

June 16, 1961 Bengel had a fall in the bathroom.

June 18, 1961 Bengel fell out of his chair.

September 15, 1961 Howard Fields brought Floyd here at 2:30 PM. We went on to Syracuse. We sat up until 10 PM and visited.

September 16, 1961 Floyd and I sat on the Presbyterian Church front to view the Fireman's parade. Russ Hill brought us home.

September 18, 1961 Russell took Floyd and I to Monticello to visit Grace. Got home 4:30 PM. Russell made a black top driveway.

September 30, 1961 In Infields arrived 12:30 and started with Fred Bengel for the John Sickmuller Home in Jeffersonville.

December 21, 1961 Forty-three Christmas cards to date.

- April 22, 1962 I had taxi to Sunrise Service on Mager Ave. Charles Willi place. 100 attended. Bob Oestrich brought me home.
- May 17, 1962 Grace, Edna and Alice came. Grace stayed 45 minutes.
- May 22, 1962 I planted more corn, finished spading my garden.
- May 28, 1962 I tended baby William Cogswell. [Editor's Note: The Cogswells were at this time living in the upstairs apartment.]
- May 30, 1962 For the last two years I went to the and rode home with Leah Moffett, as she was going to Amenzo Atkins's, next to my home, anyway. This year I decided not to attend the oration by our pastor, Rev. George Beimler, and stayed at home. William Cogswell mowed my lawn the day before and I mowed Peter Avery's lawn and it needed the grass raked up, which I did. I got two bushels of clippings. Decoration Day after dinner I mowed Mr. Atkins's lawn with the power mower. I had my usual programs on the television: Ernie Ford and "Yours for a Song," Art Linkletter and "Queen for a Day." [Editor's Note: "Queen for a Day" was Fred's favorite.]
- June 21, 1962 Floyd had another operation Thursday.
- June 30, 1962 Quarter Century Club at the Lenape. Forty-eight attended. Beefsteak supper.
- August 11, 1962 Quarter Century Club clambake. Frank Birkett drove Paul Harper, Charles Matsinger and Fred Gorton. Arrived 11:30 AM.
- August 12, 1962 I got home from the clambake in Binghamton at 8:20 PM. 114 attended. Jack Lavelle drove Bill Haflin (Mar. 6, 1898-Sept. 27, 1968), Charles Matsinger, Frank Birkett and Fred Gorton. No initiation.
- August 24, 1962 Earl and Edna took me to Oneonta and Hartwick Seminary for Floyd's funeral yesterday. Also to George Jr.'s. He served us pumpkin pie and coffee.
- January 26, 1963 Bread man didn't come Thursday at all.
- February 15, 1963 A man came today and put in a dial telephone. No charge.
- February 29, 1963 On June 15, 1923 we paid balance of Royce Estate for piano \$200. Russell paid \$50. We owed \$163.50 with interest. Russ was

thirteen years old when we bought it.

- April 21, 1963 Russell sat with me in church today. He took me to Loomis. I called on Minnie Atkins and Mrs. Kinne. {Editor's Note: Fred got to services at the Presbyterian Church almost every week, usually walking there from his home on Carrier Street. I taught Sunday School at this time and when I went to church afterward I usually sat with him unless I was singing—I use the term loosely since I can't carry a tune—in the Junior Choir. Russ rarely attended services. Marie only went on special occasions such as Christmas Candlelight Service. Leslie's family was brought up Catholic.}
- May 8, 1963 On television Rev. Marshall L. Smith married Nelson A. Rockefeller and Margareta Murphy. She was divorced only thirty-three days. The Presbyterian law requires one year before remarriage. [Editor's Note: This was a big scandal at the time. Rev. Smith was pastor at the Presbyterian Church in Liberty prior to being "stolen" by the Rockefellers to preach in their church.]
- May 15, 1963 I planted acorn squash and corn and sunflower seed.
- May 25, 1963 Leah Moffett called at 8:45 AM. We had a nice visit. Mr. Cogswell took off all storm windows on my house.
- June 9, 1963 I got a letter from Alvin Gorton saying if you want to keep warm this fall and winter come and see me and I'm sure you will enjoy it. [Alvin Gorton (Dec. 13, 1878-Aug. 26, 1968) was in the army 1898 (volunteers) and regular army 1901-3. Went to Ft. Myers, Florida, 1911 and took up a 160 acre homestead in April 1913. He married three times: 1) Rachel Brundage 2) Mrs. Scholton (d. April 11, 1963 @ 80) and Mabel Blatchley Vanderworth, who was 82 when they married on May 5, 1964.]
- June 22, 1963 I've been writing up the Presbyterian Church history. [Editor's Note: Another document I don't have a copy of.]
- July 9, 1963 Russell took me to Monticello to call on sister Grace. I spent five hours there.
- August 2, 1963 Russell and Marie took me to Stratford for Donald and Laurie's wedding.
- November 23, 1963 I sat many hours listening on television concerning the President's tragic death.

- February 21, 1964 Helen Infield called this afternoon. Fred Bengel died today, aged 88 years.
- February 22, 1964 I wrote up the names of 75 church people of the Presbyterian Church of Liberty, New York.
- April 19, 1964 Barbara Short took me to their home for supper. Also her Grandpa called at 12:45. Played scrabble and had a nice supper. Got home at 7:45 PM.
- May 31, 1964 I went to see the remains of the Tannery. It fell down last week.
- June 7, 1964 It was raining when Russell got me home, about 7 PM. Lightning sruck our television pole while we waited for the rain to stop. Cut a piece out above our clothesline pole. We were parked next to my garage. The ground wire in Avery's cellar was black and it smoked somewhat. (My son had a wrist watch with a metal band and he felt it like an electric shock. The car was about 12' from the pole.)
- June 29, 1964 I cut grass next to Atkins's barn and could hardly walk back to the house.
- December 20, 1964 Kathy's beau took her to supper.
- January 29, 1965 The William Cogswells moved out of rooms upstairs this afternoon.
- March 5, 1965 A colored lady wanted to rent my rooms. Jehovah Watchtower recommended her.
- March 8, 1965 A real estate salesman came to see my home to sell.
- May 9, 1965 Kathy came for me Sunday inseed of Russell. I learned Skippy went to sleep after 18 years.
- October 9, 1965 Russell moved to Walden. [Editor's Note: Still working for NYS E&G, he took a position as District Manager, which he held until he retired and moved to Florida.]
- December 29, 1965 Russell takes Kathy back to college Sunday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- January 14, 1966 Russell spent about three hours with me while Dr. Grant had many patients in his office.

- March 27, 1966                      Sister Grace Farquhar died at 7PM. Lived one week after broken hip. 92.
- April 23, 1966                      Leslie and Catherine and Colum and Moira Kelly [Claire Gorton Kelly's two oldest children] took me home from Trumbull.
- April 30, 1966                      Frank Brace rent advance for May.
- May 15, 1966                        Man mowed Peter Avery lawn. \$3.50.
- May 25, 1966                        I walked to Cooper's, had a taxi home. The longest walk in many months.
- July 4, 1966                         I phoned Russell, Marie and Kathy last evening in Walden.
- July 14, 1966                        Dr. Harry Ordin pulled my last wisdom tooth.
- August 10, 1966                    I stayed three nights in Walden.
- September 9, 1966                Russell took me to his home. I stayed all night.
- September 10, 1966               Leslie and Catherine took me to their home to live.
- September 25, 1966               I got a letter from Catherine Hill. Catherine [Gorton} took me for a walk in the back lot.

Editor's Note: This is the last diary entry, but Fred continued to write letters and to record his memories, dreams, and opinions on paper.

Excerpts from letters to Kathy:

- July 29, 1968                        I am sending you the second half of my life story for you to type using carbon making two or three copies for me. "The Plodder" is the title.
- July 31, 1968                        I put the large envelope in the RFD mail box the 30<sup>th</sup> containing the last half of my life story stating "1<sup>st</sup> class." No stamps. Said, "Postman, please put on stamps for me." in a separate letter. He said perhaps they sent it on to you to collect postage from you. He rang our bell with the letter with the dollar all sealed.
- August 1, 1968                        This is a continuation of letter of July 31. A man called on Catherine with the dollar letter, saying the parcel was sent on without postage.

- August 27, 1968 I have rewritten the entire of the story of my life and added twenty items. Who cares if we never get the lost parcel.
- October 6, 1968 I took my usual walk next to the fence in our back yard, about 300' distant, with the two canes. At Fred and Anita's home celebrated my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Eighteen lighted candles on the cake. To make it interesting I had an envelope with a \$10 bill and each great-grandchild threw dice. The ace counted seven and the other spots by number. Four had fourteen. Wayne threw eighteen, the winner. He was happy and said he never got so much money before in all his life. He is seven or eight years old. Fred and Anita came in last night, both dressed with new suits. Anita's suit fit her beautifully and she looked more like a girl of eighteen than a mother of twelve children.
- November 13, 1968 I can scarcely walk even with two canes to balance me. I can feed myself but have trouble holding a fork or spoon. Maybe your sweetie would like to see a young couple's picture taken in 1942. He wouldn't recognize me now as I am 90 and don't improve with age. You may tell him still own my first house and will sell it to him for a song.
- November 15, 1968 I expect a lady next week to come and type the other half of my life story. Seventy or more pages. My last item is four men electrocuted. Three of them I knew real well. The fourth one saw sparks from a live wire down in the road and to save others chopped it off with his ax. It was raining. He was electrocuted. He was a hero but didn't know it.
- January 7, 1969 My dollar is worth less than 25¢. The world is gone cuckoo. I think, why complain? I won't be here in 1999 anyway. My last pay was \$42 a week twenty-three years ago and I got \$37.50 take home pay. A fifteen year old boy gets \$2 and hour. I lived in the wrong time.
- January 17, 1969 I sorted in three piles today the three copies of my life story. I have mailed to two companies an account of the story to see if they want a copy to pass judgement if it has any value worth printing. One title "Looking Back," or "The Plodder," but I didn't mention either. If some of the cousins were invited to your wedding, who knows, they might attend. Tell Sandy he made a good impression.

From the memoirs:



February 7, 1969

I am not a writer, but would like to have some noted writer use my life story, perhaps my past looking back from four years to ninety years.

From the letters to Kathy:

May 24, 1969

I have quite a time to write. It's just like drawing a picture, a slow process. I fell down in the back yard and hit my face in the sod, bent my glasses frame, got a cut on my nose, and the other side a shiner under my left eye which cleared up in a week. Tuesday I fell down in the house as I turned to answer the phone. Now I can hardly walk. A pain in my hip hurts when walking but don't hurt if I keep quiet. It took only ninety years to learn to keep quiet.

June 27, 1969

I will make 91 years if I live to September 17, 1969. The cataract in my left eye is slow growing. I can still see real good to read, thank God.

From the memoirs:

August 18, 1969

I dreamed I was living in my home in Liberty and started for work. I was late in starting, the street was flooded in front of my house, and it was hard to pick my way across the street, so I went cross lots. One place I went up a rise of ground 15' to a point I never saw before, then came to a very large field, newly plowed and level. I was worried I would be at least an hour late to work.

August 22, 1969

I had a dream on the couch. It seemed I was working for the electric company, using a large push broom. The floor was green and newly painted but try as I would I always found a place where I had skipped. At last I got desperate and swept it right out the back door. I awoke, but went right back to sleep again. This time I saw about six or more little boys dressed alike in red, playing.

November 18, 1969

I had a dream. A terrible looking stout man came in and stared at me. I thought he was after money, but he went away and didn't do me any harm. It looked like a bad omen to me. I went right back to sleep and had another dream. I was in a strange man's field and cutting poor hay with a sickle, yet I knew I could do more with a scythe. I was cutting with the sickle on my knees and put the hay in a long shed, about a ton of it. Then I cut weeds in narrow paths from 6' to 10' wide between bushes, but didn't gather them. I awoke but wasn't tired.

- February 7, 1970 I dreamed that Ken Davis had eight airplanes or more which were small, about 10' long with red stripes across. He offered me a ride, but I never got it. He would take off and let me walk half a mile. Daisy was there, waiting for a ride, but he didn't take her either. He died age sixty years when she had been dead eleven years. I am here 91 years, 4 months old in good health, but I use a walker with Catherine to attend and balance me.
- February 19, 1970 I began walking by myself.
- From the letters to Kathy:
- February 19, 1970 I don't ever expect to walk without a walker. Ten days before I fell I had trouble to walk and was due for a fall. I was in the hospital thirty-eight days, but Medicare will pay most of the hospital bills. My skin cancer next to my left eye disappeared entirely but the cataract on my left eye runs a lot. I can see with my right eye to read real well. I feel good but it is a problem to write a letter. I hope to sell my home before I go to the place of no return.
- From the memoirs:
- February 22, 1970 I dreamed I was gathering stove wood in a desolate woods. The lengths 5' and 6' on the wheelbarrow to take home. I don't know where I lived but it was near the woods. No one seemed to care if I took it either.
- February 25, 1970 I had another dream at 10:30 AM. We were eating sandwiches and I took the walker and was walking with great speed. I didn't see why I should use the walker at all when I could hustle so fast. Russell was there with five or six others.
- February 26, 1970 I had a dream in bed last night. A large pile of logs, brush and undergrowth, some of which I cut with my scythe. We had ten men and boys to help. It took about a week to do the job. It was a very large pile and it seemed to get larger instead of smaller as we worked. We put it in piles and set it on fire. One pile of logs, about twenty large logs, took all night to burn up. And before morning I had another dream. This time I was drawing manure from the barnyard with one horse and wagon. The manure was real fine, like dust, and easy to spread. This time I was living in Liberty. I always dream of working, or floods, or dogs chasing me. I always fall down but the dog never bites me.

From the letters to Kathy:

March 3, 1970 I haven't sold my home yet but expect to soon. I hope to see Russell with the deed for me to sign. I never expect to see the place again. I need a haircut. The barber will have to come here.

From the memoirs:

March 6, 1970 I dreamed I called on the Beseths to inquire if they were going to pay in advance the rent for March. Their faces didn't look familiar, like I saw them in Liberty. Right after midnight I dreamed again. I was sawing stakes for the electric company but made only one bunch of thirty stakes and couldn't find any wire to tie them together.

March 9, 1970 In bed at 7 AM I dreamed six young newly married couples, none over twenty years, met me at the pond which we scraped out of the black muck in the year 1896. This pond is now filled up and a six lane highway occupies this space. The pond was nearly 75' in diameter and 7' deep and Father bought a flat-bottom boat for us, but the pond was so small it was no fun to row on it.

March 11, 1970 I had a dream in bed. I had an acquaintance, Oath Rampe, who wanted to rent my upstairs apartment in Liberty. No price was mentioned. My wife Daisy was living. The same night I dreamed I went in the hog pen and the large white sow caught hold of my clothes and I prayed to God to save me from being eaten by the hog. I awoke unhurt. [Robert "Oath" Rampe d. Aug. 28, 1954 @ 66. His wife Sophia d. May 14, 1969 @ 81.]

From the letters to Kathy:

April 6, 1970 Your Pa and Ma came 10 AM on his birthday to visit us and talk over the sale of my house on 100 Carrier Street in Liberty. The closing date is April 7<sup>th</sup>. I signed the deed. I am glad to be rid of the last of my holdings. [The house was sold to Vern and Bev Beseth, who had been renting it.]

September 30, 1970 I am well. I just had an electric shave, my biggest chore of the week. I now hate to work at all. I have quite an effort to say some words. I also have trouble to read with my good eye. I hope I don't get blind. I got seventeen birthday cards and sixteen great-grandchildren sang "Happy Birthday" in the evening. It took more than an hour to write this letter so far. I can still feed myself and I

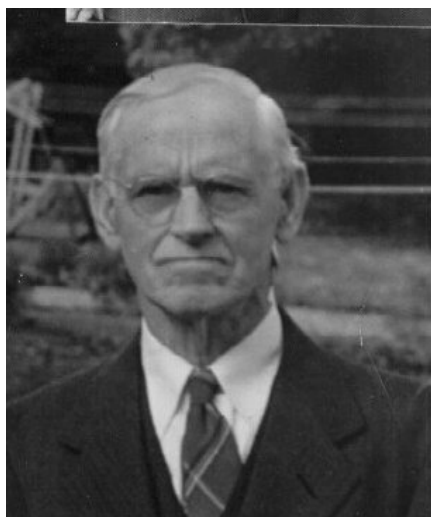
use the t.v. five hours a day. Love, Grampa.

Fred Gorton died at Buckingham Gardens Convalescent Home in Newtown, Connecticut on November 26, 1973. He was ninety-five.

# THE LIFE OF A PLODDER FRED GORTON'S 95 YEARS

## Part Four

an account compiled from his memoirs and diaries  
by his granddaughter  
Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson



*Fred Gorton in 1948*

## INTRODUCTION AND DISCLAIMER

You are reading Part Four of the memoirs of Fred Gorton, consisting of Appendix I-III of THE LIFE OF A PLODDER. Please see separate files for the first six chapters.

This pdf file is fully searchable by using the "find" feature and typing in the name or place you are interested in. The font size can also be enlarged for easier reading. The text is being made available in this format so that it may be easily printed or downloaded, but I would appreciate acknowledgment of the source if you choose to reproduce any of the material elsewhere.

The complete LIFE OF A PLODDER contains the following: CHAPTER ONE: THE CHILD, CHAPTER TWO: THE YOUTH, CHAPTER THREE: THE MARRIED MAN, CHAPTER FOUR: THE R.F.D. CARRIER, CHAPTER FIVE: THE COMPANY MAN, CHAPTER SIX: THE SENIOR CITIZEN, APPENDIX I: EXCERPTS FROM DAVID HALL'S DIARY, APPENDIX II: ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY FRED GORTON ON MAY 2, 1963, and APPENDIX III: MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ABOUT PEOPLE FRED GORTON KNEW.

I have tried to select those events in his life and those entries in his diaries which best show the man and his times. I hope he would have been pleased. The original version of this book was made for Fred's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. There were five copies printed in 1980 and then thirty-five more including additional photographs. This new version is revised and expanded, with an attempt made to identify the people Fred Gorton wrote about. Unless I was certain of the correction, I have left the spelling of names as he wrote them. I've also left his spelling for "trashing buckwheat" and the like. Typographical errors are mine. Those involving dates may well have been missed in proofreading, since they wouldn't be caught without checking each one against the original. Please feel free to send corrections to me at [emerson@megalink.net](mailto:emerson@megalink.net).

The opinions expressed in these pages are Fred Gorton's. He was not politically correct by modern standards. Neither was he concerned about libel or slander. He may have been wrong in some of his statements, but he believed he was recording nothing but the truth. I make no apology for him, nor for sharing these records of historical interest with a wider audience. If any of the descendants of those mentioned herein wish to dispute one of my grandfather's comments, I will be happy to add their side of the story to this document and put the revised version on line.

Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson  
[emerson@megalink.net](mailto:emerson@megalink.net)  
Wilton, Maine  
February, 2005

P.S. To those who have read my novels, in particular *Julia's Mending* and the forthcoming *No Mortal Reason*, some of this material will sound very familiar. For more information on my professional writing, as opposed to this project, which was a personal labor of love, please see my website at [www.kathylynnemerson.com](http://www.kathylynnemerson.com)

## APPENDIX I

## EXCERPTS FROM DAVID HALL'S DIARY

These entries were copied by Fred Gorton from the diary kept by his uncle, David Hall, who was born in 1827 and died on June 10, 1893. After Hall's death, his wife, Jerusha Ann Gorton Hall, continued to make entries. Fred borrowed the diary on March 16, 1957 from their daughter's widower, Will Ratcliff (April 5, 1863-October 27, 1959) and returned the "diary books" on April 16. Four days after Ratcliff's death, he telephoned Margaret Ratcliff "concerning Uncle David's diary" but there is no further mention of the original.

The remarks in parenthesis are Fred's comments. I have not attempted to correct most of the spelling or punctuation. There is no way to tell how much of the whole Fred copied, but it appears to me that he extracted only the entries that were of interest to him. The reference to diary books implies there was much more information that was not preserved.

The first entries he copied were from 1878, the year he was born.

H. Ernhout repaired his grist mill in June and part of July, 1878

Lewis Wheeler built a house in the summer of 1878.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| July 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1878 | Peter Redington's house burned down.(d. July 14, 1946; farmer near Gregory's)  |
| August 29, 1878             | There was a sham fight at Deckertown.  |
| October 11, 1878            | Butchered the old sow. Sold the pork at six cents a pound. Weighed 285 pounds.   |
| January, 1879               | Mrs. Parliman sold her farm to Wm. Cooley for \$1500.  |
| February 12, 1879           | N. G. Gorton traded his white Kate mare to Ike Gorton for a sorrel four year old mare.   |
| March 31, 1879              | Cash Bonnell's Saloon and Christopher Foreman in Liberty Village burned down in the evening.   |
| April, 1879                 | Jacob Hunt sold his farm near Bushville to Gideon Hornbeck for \$500.  |
| May 13, 1879                | The milk train time was 2:30 to 4:30 at Parliman's Station on the Midland Railroad. [Now known as New York Ontario & Western Railroad].                    |
| June 12, 1879               | Henry Wynkoop's house was struck with lightning during a heavy thunder storm on the 12 <sup>th</sup> of June and it hailed some and rained so hard that it |

washed steep hill sides that was put in the spring crops so as to injure them considerable.

- September 29, 1879 Began to eat pancakes.
- October 3, 1879 Benjamin Willy's barn and wagon house burned down the night of October 3, 1879.
- February 20, 1880 John H. Divine sold the James Divine farm to David Carr about the 20<sup>th</sup> of February for \$3,300.
- April 5, 1880 Henry Wynkoop moved his family to the George Mallory farm.
- June 22, 1880 Joseph Eldridge was tried on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, 1880 at Monticello for poisoning a pair of stags for Henry Pierpoint and a cow for Mrs. Eldridge and was committed and sentenced by Judge Auburn to State Prison for 3 years.
- June 29, 1880 John Wales and Sarles Purvis stores burned down in the night of June 29, 1880

Samuel McCoy is a horse doctor living near Sacket Pond.

Jacob Becker traded the oxen he got of Gill Gorton for a white mare and got \$25.00 to boot on Aug. 9, 1880 and bought Jonathan McMillen's gray horse to match her and started for Rockland to work with his team Aug. 11, 1880.

September 3, 1880 I finished a large stone boat on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1880 and I began to use it the same day.

Levi Steenrod built a blacksmith shop in Liberty Village in the latter part of the summer and early part of the fall and began work in it the forepart of October 1880.

November 4, 1880 The railroad built a wire fence from Strongtown crossing nearly to Parksville in the fall of 1880 and a sign for travelers "Look Out for Cars" at the Parlimans' Crossing (the George Taylor place and Wm. Cooley's place on the corner.)

There was a donation to W. M. Kilbourne for Domanie Carpenter on September 14, 1880 raised \$50.25. Domanie Carpenter held a protracted meeting in the Huntingdon School House beginning Nov. 8, 1880 ending November 26. [Editor's note: Dominie was the title given to a clergyman in the Dutch Reformed Church and, informally, to any minister. It was sometimes also used for schoolmasters.]



The Jordan Bros. built a creamery in Hurleyville in the fall of 1880 and began to buy milk in November.

John Ishults began tending H. Ernhout's grist mill at Liberty Falls in the fall of 1880.

Ice in the winter of 1880-1 was 2 ft. thick.

January 5, 1881 Daniel Mc Millen's horse dropped dead in the road near Wm. Ryder's in the night.

The Widow Crain bought the Adam Bedford place Jan., 1881 for \$1000. (Next to Gerow's place)

April 15, 1881 Mrs. Cooley's gray mare died of lockjaw in the night.

July 19, 1881 President Garfield was shot on July 2, 1881 in the Pennsylvania Depot at Washington by Charles Guitteau. He died the 19<sup>th</sup>.

August 1, 1881 Thomas Lane had 2 cows and a heifer struck by lightning. They were standing under an oak tree.

Fred Sebolt began to get rocks for the Wagon Bridge at Liberty Falls in the last week in August, began the bridge in September 1881. (I think that was the arch bridge of stone next to Manion's store.)

Henry Ernhout built an addition on his grist mill late in the fall of 1881.

Nov. 21, 1881 I bought a buffalo robe of Sarles and Purvis. Price \$13.00.

The Jordan Brothers built a creamery at Liberty Village in the winter of 1881 and 1882.

January 4, 1882 The old grist mill (Depuy owner) at Hasbrouck burned down in the evening.

April 3, 1882 Jordan brothers creamery at Liberty Village began business.

May 1, 1882 The Stevensville creamery began business.

May 2, 1882 Ice froze an inch thick on the night of May 2, 1882.

May 21, 1882 Wm. Ryder's son Frank broke his arm.

June 20, 1882 Gill Gorton raised his barn. Got it finished so as to put hay in. (They served the men at the "raising bee" with pumpkin pie and crullers. Fred and Floyd Gorton wouldn't be five years old until September 17<sup>th</sup>. It was a

framed barn. It burned down while I was Engineer at the Liberty Power House at 7 in the morning and I refused to blow the whistle.)

- Aug. 16, 1882      We began to eat bread from our own rye.
- Aug. 17, 1882      We had a car load of lime on the Strongtown switch. N. G. Gorton helped draw it with two teams.
- September 9, 1882      Henry A. Cramer, agent for the Worlds Map and canvassing Sullivan County came here Saturday night, Sept. 9, 1882.
- October 1, 1882      Domani Fuller preached at Stevensville and Strongtown, Huntingdon.
- October 8, 1882      They finished the iron railroad bridge at Liberty Falls except part of the railing.
- November 12, 1882      Frank Ernhout ran away.(Frank Ernhout d. Oct. 16, 1915 of typhoid fever in Schenectady)
- December 2, 1882      The morning train on the Midland Railroad made the last trip for the season.

1883—There was two trains put on N.Y. O & W Railroad that run in the night and pass at Liberty at 1:40 o'clock.

- February 19, 1883      N. G. Gorton bought a chestnut sorrel colt with two or 3 white feet and a star in the head. He was coming 3 years old. He got him down to Sandburgh. \$100. Name Major.

Seth Bonney sold his farm in Strongtown known as the Bedford place to Charles McDonald the latter part of March, 1883. Price \$2700.

- May 10, 1883      Bonnell & Co. Circus showed at Liberty.

Fred Gorton broke his right leg on July 19, 1883 toward night by falling through the pitch hole from the barn floor to the basement floor and it was set by Doctors Perry and Robertson in the afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup>. [Editor's note: Fred's granddaughter, Kathy Lynn Gorton Emerson—that would be me—blatantly stole this episode in Fred's life to write *Julia's Mending* (1987), a children's historical novel (for ages 8-12) set in Liberty Falls in 1887. Several other things that happened to Fred also happen to the fictional "Julia" and her cousin "Simon."]

The colored folks held a camp meeting in Lows Grove near Monticello commencing September 8, 1883 ending on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

The Sullivan County Fair held at Monticello October 3 & 4<sup>th</sup>, 1883.

January 15, 1884      Ike Gorton moved to Walton to start a butcher shop with James Crispell.

May 15, 1884          Wash Huntington went back to the mines.

Frank Ernhout came back about the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 1884.

August 10, 1884      There was an earthquake shock felt in New York City both the eastern and western states.

Alfred Strong moved about April 1, 1885 to his farm in Strongtown.

Thomas H. Houlihan bought the Liberty House of Uriah Messiter (1847-1905; Young, Messiter and Dodge) in the spring of 1885 and Mr. Charles Erf bought the Clements Hotel.

I drewed with a sleigh till April 12, 1885.

April 18, 1885          George Kortright (d. June, 1908 @ 79) & wife (Phebe Gorton, d. Feb. 1908 @ 77) & Gill Gorton and family came here to eat maple sugar.

April 21, 1885          James Demeress bought Wm. Demeress farm.

April 23, 1885          I heard swallows, night hawks, and whippoorwills and a few May flies in the day time.

May 6, 1885            C. T. Mallory died at Mt. Vernon.

May 10, 1885          C. T. Mallory funeral at the Methodist Church.

June 30, 1885          Ann and I attended Rebecca Gorton's funeral.(widow of Collins Gorton)

General Grant died at Mt. Gregovon July 23, 1885. Buried in Riverside Park Aug. 8

Aug. 27, 1885          There was a Harvest Home at Palmer's Grove at Mongaup Center. (Fred Gorton attended 7 years old.)

Sept. 23, 1885          Ann & Celia went to the Monticello Fair. It was very windy, cold day for the season and there was light snow squalls and rain by spells in the middle of the day. It was tedious.

October 19, 1885      Professor Tucker showed slight of hand tricks at the Huntingdon School.

Domanie Kelly & wife came here on March 28, 1886 stayed all night & preached his farewell

sermon and went home the 10<sup>th</sup>.

There was no trains run by here either up or down on the O&W on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1886 on account of slides.

Jerry Bridges failed in business about Mar. 10, 1886.

Edith Fox began teaching school in the Huntington District on April 22, 1886. School closed July 10<sup>th</sup>.

Wm. T. Homes bought the top of Walnut Mountain in May 1886 and built a 5 story house on it in the fall and had the carpenter work nearly done when it flew down on Nov. 18 in a shower between 11 and 12 o'clock AM. Wind was SW.

The Liberty and White Lake Turnpike was built in the spring and summer of 1886. The 4 horse Tally Ho Stage Line was started from Liberty to White Lake on June 14, 1886 by Charles Stanton of Mongaup Valley.

Mr. Davidson came here to make shingles.

Cora Weeks came home Sept. 8, 1886 and went back the 18<sup>th</sup>.

October 7, 1885      The Huntington Sunday School held a picnic at Sheldrake.

Ann and Celia went to Thunderhill on October 12, 1886 came home the 21<sup>st</sup>.

November 28, 1886      DeWitt Beebe was thrown down and laid up quite a while at the Walnut Mountain House.

Ann and Celia went to Ann's mothers to dinner on Thanksgiving Day in a snow storm.

November 27, 1886      Floyd, Fred, & Leslie Gorton were here on a visit.

January 9, 1887      William Wood's leg was crushed age 18 years. He fell under a railroad car at Livingston Manor. (He died age 80)

January 13, 1887      Ann and I went to Reas Bushes to dinner.

January 14, 1887      Wm. Manion's horse shed fell down by the weight of snow on the roof. Mr. Frasier had a pair of horses caught under it and one of them hurt considerable and Thomas Ratcliff also had a horse but it did not get hurt. (William Manion d. Oct. 1914 with an estate valued at \$85,077.42. His daughter Winnie m. Will Ryan. His son Wim J. d. Dec. 10, 1945 @ 55. His son Thomas d. Dec. 14, 1966 @ 75.)

March 16, 1887      Ann & I went to Monticello & made a visit to Rim Hansees. N. G. Gorton bought an organ for Jeanette from him.

Charles Kilbourne [Editor's note: elsewhere he's called Charles T but this may be the C. F. Kilbourne who d. May 7, 1903 @ 65] sold his farm at Strongtown about the middle of March to John Van Tassel. Took possession April 8, 1887. Price \$10,000. (At that time there was a small lake on either side of the highway.)

Benjamin Smith moved on the Miss Brewster farm on April 1, 1887. George Taylor on the 20<sup>th</sup>. They done a butcher business. Peddled house to house known as Smith and Taylor.

William Wood of near Sheldrake fell under the car at Livingston Manor on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1887. His right leg was crushed below the knee so badly that amputation was necessary and the left one bruised. [Editor's note: I know this contradicts the entry for January 9 above but this is the way it was copied by Fred Gorton.]

William Clements of Liberty Falls aged about 12 years was accidentally shot while a party of boys was undressing to take a swim at Liberty Falls. Preston Kortright (d. 1913; O & W track foreman; m. Ella Akins who died in 1949 @ 76) one of the party had a pistol in his pocket and by throwing the coat down the pistol was discharged. The ball entered Clements' body and lodged near his left shoulder. It happened the evening of June 16, 1887.

The O&W built a Depot at Liberty Falls. They began the forepart of August, 1887 finished the later part of September.

September 6, 1887      The Jeffersonville Fair was held. The Sullivan County Fair was held September 6, 7 & 8, 1887.

September 21, 1887      N.G. & Grace Gorton, Will Carr & Will Ratcliff went to the fair at Newburgh.

September 28, 1887      Joel Crispell moved to Cyrus Strong's.

The Free Methodists built a church at Liberty Falls the latter part of the summer and fall just got it finished so as to hold Quarterly Meeting in it commencing December 23 (28?) 1887.

Charley Kilbourne moved from Van Tassles to Elmer Rhodes to live in January 1888. (The Rhodes place is across from the Strongtown school house)

February 10, 1888      Coldest temperature in Sullivan County, 24° below zero.

February 21, 1888      I bought a pair of red steer calves with stars in their heads of Clark Gorton. Price \$18.00.

- February 26, 1888      The church at Liberty Falls was dedicated.
- March 6, 1888          They took Mrs. Jacob Wilson to the Middletown Asylum.
- March 12, 1888        We had our worst blizzard. Snow drifts 12 feet deep. The O&W railroad was tied up for 6 days. N. G. Gorton melted snow for the 25 cows to drink.
- June 15, 1888         The Catholic Church was struck by lightning. There was several men working in the church at the time. The church was badly wrecked and James H. Van Orden instantly killed aged 37 yr. 1 mo. 6 da.
- July 20, 1888         John Allen was hung in Monticello for the murder of Mrs. Dresuld Ulrich on October 8, 1887. (He shot her with a shotgun. I think he was the last person hung in Sullivan County. His last words were "Let her go, Gallagher." Gallagher was the sheriff.) [Editor's note: Fred got everything right except the sheriff's name. The expression "Let her go, Gallagher." first became popular during the Civil War and caught on among prison inmates afterward. There are records of condemned men saying this to their executioners all over the U.S. during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The sheriff at the time was Walter Vail Irvine. This murder case plays a minor role in my forthcoming novel *No Mortal Reason*, book three in the Diana Spaulding Mystery Series.]
- August 27, 1888       Fredmore Hotel at Robisonville burned in the morning. Bronson Robison burned to death. [Editor's Note: The *Walton Reporter* for September 1, 1888 reported that "Bronson Robertson, of Robertsonville, Sullivan County, was burned to death Monday morning while trying to save others. The fire was at Predmore's hotel at Robertsonville and was first discovered at about 4:30 AM. The flames had made such progress when discovered that it was with great difficulty that the inmates of the house were rescued and in trying to save an old couple who were boarding at the hotel, and who were asleep and who did not hear the alarm which aroused the others, Robertson was overcome by the heat and smoke and lost his life. He was a well-known citizen, and leaves a widow and several grown up children. His remains were found in the cellar, burned so as to be scarcely recognizable." Thanks to N. Fred Fries for sending this to LibertyNY@yahoogroups.com]
- Jerry Bridges was taken to Middletown Asylum about Sept. 1, 1888.
- September 18, 1888    I was a witness at Monticello on the suit between Waldo Kinney (Waldo Kinne built the Strongtown creamery) and Truman Tymerson (Rented N. G. Gorton cottage; killed by a train in 1888 at age 25; filed suit against

Waldo Kinne earlier that year.)

Joseph Raymond built a stone bridge just below the Ed. Kilbourne house the forepart of Oct. 1888. Price \$25.00.

D.T. Ratcliff built the stone bridge by the Strongtown milk station finished October 6, 1888 (The above was Will Ratcliff's father.)

October 11, 1888 S. Clark Jenkins was coming from Liberty with horse and wagon on the Gerow Crossing. The down milk train struck his horse and killed it and broke the wagon badly and injured him fatally and he died on the 12<sup>th</sup> aged 84 years.

John Curtis came to Joel Blackman's to live about the middle of October 1888 came here the 5<sup>th</sup> (John Curtis 18 years old in the spring of 1893)

December 27, 1888 There was a rainbow in the North about 2 o'clock.

January 31, 1889 There was a mad dog came to Liberty. Bit several dogs, also a cow belonging to Ira Divine and some cattle for Thomas Gildersleeve. The dog came from Grahamsville, was killed at Liberty.

March 18, 1889 Jacob Wilson moved from the Geo. Kilbourne farm to a farm at Robensville. (The Kilbourne farm later was John D. Buchanan's.)

March 27, 1889 Jonathan Nichols barn burned about 4 in the morning. It burned up 14 cows, 3 horses, and about 10 ton of hay and some feed. Insured for \$500.

Mr. E. Van Fredenburgh built a factory below Humphrey's Mill in the summer of 1889 got it running in the fall to manufacture wheelbrowers and shingles. (Edward Van Fredenberg ran a laundry on Mill Street that served Loomis Sanitarium; his wife, Matilda Jane, d. July 3, 1949 @ 93)

There was a scimelton for the benefit of Thomas Divine and wife in the evening of October 3, 1889. (Anna Bradley)

October 13, 1889 The Talmage Church burned down 2 AM.

November 3, 1889 Frank Burnham's wife & children started for Michigan. (N. G. Gorton's tenant)

January 26, 1890 Ann and I went to N. G. Gorton's wedding anniversary. (They celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> January 26, 1920 in the Presbyterian Church basement. All the children were present.)

February 22, 1890 Charley Farquhar moved from Hurley to Mary McMullen's.

May 8, 1890 Boblinks came.

Tommy Clements went away from William Manions about Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> 1890.

Ben Blanchard moved to Ben Van Inwegen's March, 1891.

March 27-8, 1891 Edward and Walter Randall papered our setting room and Celia's bedroom. It cost \$3.30 for the work and \$2.90 for the paper.(Edward J. Randall Sr. arrived from England 1851; he was a painter and a member of the Baptist Church of Liberty for 71 years; b. June 11, 1942; d. Aug. 4, 1934)

Wm. Manion and Wm. Pierpoint bought Byron Gray's grist mill in May, 1891. Price not known. (At Ferndale.)

N. G. Gorton built a small house on the Lane Lot in 1891. (Fred Gorton helped lathe it, 13 years old.)

May 8, 1891 Charles Farquhar moved from Taylors to N. G. Gorton's.

The Tig Tag was finished and the first work train passed through the tunnel on June 22, 1891 and the 1<sup>st</sup> passenger train the 25<sup>th</sup> Estimated cost \$300,000. (Known as the Fallsburgh Tunnel.)

August 5, 1891 Conductors Clam Bake at Livingston Manor.

Buffalo flies came here in summer of 1891 & was very thick on cattle and grew scarce by Sept. 25. Was nearly gone Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>.

September 24, 1891 Horace Wheeler went to Orange County Fair at Port Jervis.

October 15, 1891 Ruben Huntington went on the police force.

The town of Liberty Village built an iron bridge in Liberty Village by Whittier "picture gallery" October 1891. (Known to us as Steenrod Bridge.)

Charles McDonald built a new house on the Bedford homestead in Strongtown in the summer and fall of 1891.

November 9, 1891 Joel Crispell sold his farm by the Demeresse place to Wm. Cooley. Price \$1200.

December 16, 1891 There was an oyster supper at Wm. Cooley's in the evening for the benefit



of Domane Miller.

Snider Morris moved to Strongtown to Mr. Osterhouts on March 24 & 25, 1892.

March 31, 1892 Charles Turner moved from William Ryder's farm to Adam Bennett's. (Will Ryder lived near Huntington School. His son, Will Jr. left Hurleyville c. 1900. He was killed at about age 38, on Nov. 19, 1917, when his motorcycle was struck by a car in Richmond Hill, LI)

April 14, 1892 Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Broadway came and stayed all night. (Retta Gorton and husband.)

May 2, 1892 I traded my black colt 2 years old to Archie Comfort for a light bay 4 years old with some white hairs on his flank and a little brown on his back and paid \$50 to boot.

June 2, 1892 Robert Lewis was lynched and hung to a tree in Port Jervis.

June 27, 1892 A heavy rain. The streams were very high from 6 o'clock until 7. It rained very hard until 8. Fell 4 inches. The streams were higher than had been in 30 years. It took out many bridges, some damage to mill & dam, washed roads. The Arch Bridge at Liberty Falls was undermined at the lower end and Gird's Tannery went off also the wooden bridge at Doubtenville & both of them near Jim Schoonmaker's. The C. T. Kilbourne Mill was badly impaired. Most of them at Mongaup Center and Bushville went off and many others in the town.

Joseph Norris is foreman at the Liberty Creamery, 1892.

July 27, 1892 Ann & Celia attended A. Broadway's reception.

August 3, 1892 Conductors held their clambake in Liberty.

August 9, 1892 Joel Crispell's barn was struck by lightning and burned in the morning.

August 22, 1892 Aaron Stanton made a balance pole across the road opposite the house.

Celia Hall taught the Huntington School August 22, 1892. School closed December 30, 1892.

T. De Witt Talmag preached and then went back to Retta's and stayed all night.

October 14, 1892 The railroad began to fill the Loder Tressel. To work with teams the 19<sup>th</sup>. (They used a little engine named Annie to pull the dump cars. N. G. Gorton stabled three teams in his barn at the time. Gid Young & wife lived

in our house downstairs too. Their alarm clock used to wake us up long before daylight.)

December 2, 1892 I bought a six tined dung fork. Price 85 cts.

George Vininrogen broke in the Sheldrake School House took a few things of not much value and done some damage and broke in Charley Rocksford's dwelling and took a few thing not much value and committed the theft on the night of December 10, 1892. It was Saturday and he was arrested the 11<sup>th</sup>, taken to Hurley to await trial, was tried before B. T. Lawrence and he gave clear.

Aaron Stanton drewed my hemlock bark on Jan. 18 & 19, 1893. Come to \$12.37.

January 27, 1893 Harrison H. Loder, Nellie, Jonie Lester & Carrie Beach here to dinner.

March 25, 1893 Mr. Murphy came as counsil with Dr. DeKay. (Hurleyville, New York)

April 6, 1893 Peter Brochu called (blacksmith, Ferndale)

April 10, 1893 Heard a frog croak.

Snow banks lasted until April 18, 1893.

That is the last entry made by David Hall, but his wife Ann continued to write in the diary. On June 10, 1893 she made her first entry.

David continued to grow worse until June 10 when he departed this life at quarter past 8 in the morning.

July 8, 1893 The Loder Trestle finished.

July 16, 1893 John Curtis disappeared suddenly from Joel Blackman's. (Never heard from again.)

Fred Gorton worked for Aaron Stanton 13 days and got \$9, July 1893. (I, Fred Gorton, worked for Aaron Stanton for 10 days in haying and boarded with Aunt Ann and Celia. We also had morning worship every morning. It was the summer before I became 14 years old, and Daisy Stanton was born at that time. Celia said to me "the baby looks just like Aaron, her daddy." Years later Daisy married Archie Dice. My wife and I attended the wedding too.)

October 16, 1893 Ai Gorton left home. Lottie Ferdon was kicked by one of our cows in the morning and had to go home. [Charlotte Ferdon (1872-1905) m. William Randall (1871-1906)]

- October 24, 1893 Sent 12 barrels of apples to New York.
- November 1893 Able Gregory, son-in-law of De Groot, commenced building a creamery near Strongtown. Rev. A. Willis Meyer rented the Gorton cottage. Mrs. Bedford sold farm \$1500 to Mrs. Payne. Mr. Desbrow rented the Thomas Lane farm, \$200 a year for 3 years. Chas. T. Kilbourne sold to Van Tassel the farm (later Chris Bunger bought it, known as American House. Burned July 30, 1953. Loss \$75,000. Chris Bunger d. Nov. 12, 1941 @ 60. He married Mattie Jones. She d. Nov. 13, 1959 @ 84. He shipped milk.)
- October 2, 1893 Mrs. Sergeant & Retta came from the west to visit.
- November 28, 1893 Mr. Chas. Hosie moved from W. H. Kilbourne's place to the Dave Carr place. \$2000. (Carr's known as the Squire Devine Place.)
- December 20, 1893 Lottie Ferdon paid \$8 for 4 weeks board.
- Four Gorton boys had measles later part of Jan., 1894.
- March 5, 1894 Gill Gorton came and Aaron Stanton agreed to buy the farm for \$3200 to take possession April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1894. (Aunt Ann sold the farm to Aaron Stanton, as Stanton was working the farm at the time. Stanton sold the farm to Morris Siegel for \$9000. Now owned by Dewey Carr.)
- March 7, 1894 Drucilla Wickes came, stayed all night.
- March 31, 1894 Gave Aaron Stanton deed to farm. Gave mortgage \$2200. Given in Celia's name.
- Alfred Strong bought a house in Liberty Falls, March 1894. Eber Strong & wife moved in part of Joel Crispell's house.
- April 1, 1894 Aaron Stanton & wife went to John McCumber's.
- April 21, 1894 I took a mortgage on Frank Deniston's house and lot in Hurleyville. \$900.
- May 14, 1894 Frost in the night.
- June 1, 1894 Miss Elvira Hill and Cora Carr commenced dressmaking in Liberty Village. [Cora B. Carr (d. Oct. 21, 1956 @ 88) was the sister of Mrs. Clark Gorton]
- August 31, 1894 We and Brother Gill came home. On the way to the Falls he fell from the wagon and was quite bad hurt. (Fred Gorton witnessed the fall and

grabbed the wheel to prevent his getting run over. N. G. Gorton was taking Celia Hall to the train for New Paltz College.)

February 8, 1895 A blizzard, snow and wind & cold weather so that the girls did not attend school.

Trains blockaded near Gardner's Crossing & did not commence running till Sunday evening February 10, 1895.

April 1, 1895 Chris Bunger purchased the Strongtown Creamery of De Groot Bros.

James Gray bought farm of Mc Kenny, spring 1895.

April 4, 1895 Sister Elmira went to Rebecca D. Hill's to board. Mrs. R. D. Hill has rented part of her house to Mr. Hackett for a year for \$160. (Hutchinson place.)

Thomas Lane sold his arm to E. Baker in the fall of 1895.

November 12, 1895 Thermometer 17 degrees above zero.

July 5, 1896 Fire balloons sent up at evening and quite a display of fireworks.

August 19, 1896 Lillie Stanton & children visited us & Cassie Wheeler.

October 17, 1896 Liberty Depot burned.

Company at Christmastime, Ray Munson & Iva, Wm. Ratcliff & Ollie Cooley, 1896 (Also Libbie, an older sister, Ray Munson loaded a chunk of wood with gunpowder and a man who stole wood got his kitchen stove blown up.)

July 5, 1897 Electric lights in Liberty Village.

March 10, 1898 Jas. Farquhar's house burned.

March 21, 1898 Edward LeFevres paper mill located in Fallsburgh burned.

May 9, 1898 Mrs. Payne's house in Strongtown burned.

Will Schoonmaker & family moved on a farm owned by George Kortright, June 1898.

September 1, 1899 Rachel Schoonmaker moved back to New York City. Aaron Stanton sold his farm to Morris Siegel for \$8000, including furniture, & cows, horses, hens, and farming utensils.

During the spring of 1900 the Trolley Road between Liberty and Jeffersonville was commenced.

Sewers put in Liberty in the Fall of 1900.

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| April 1908 | Gill rented his farm to Mr. Brannen. (Moved to Liberty in the fall of 1912.)  |
| Fall, 1908 | Stanton bought a farm near Jim Osterhout's from F. J. Butterick. (Fred Gorton served them on the RFD Route. Butterick used to say "here comes the band" because I used to sing on the route.) |

This is the last of the entries Fred copied. His Aunt Ann died October 25, 1910.

## APPENDIX II

THIS ACCOUNT WAS WRITTEN FROM MEMORY

by

FRED GORTON

May 2, 1963

HISTORY OF LIBERTY AND VICINITY

A brick kiln two miles north of Loch Sheldrake was built on the Sheldon Porter place. It is presumed these bricks were used to build the brick chimney for the Gird Tannery which is perhaps the oldest landmark in Sullivan County, located in Liberty Falls, now Ferndale. It still stands, some 50 feet high. The red brick school house is still there and the locality was so named Red Brick. The Gird Tannery was located on a stream just below the Falls Brook with a drop of some 15 feet or more. At its top was a platform dance pavilion, which was a summer attraction for the young to enjoy.

An arch bridge built by Fred Sebolt in 1889 is still intact. Just above on the Mongaup Stream is a grist mill and pond owned by Byron Gray, where water power was used to grind the farmers' grain. The O & W Railroad built a bridge over this pond 102 feet above the water. Its span was about 250 feet long and was finished on October 8, 1862.

The Free Methodist Church was built in 1887 and dedicated for worship April 26, 1888.

Rance Coleman had a carding mill run by water power where the filter beds are now located on the corner leading to Neversink.

Edward Fredenburgh had a wheelbarrow factory which was a failure. Next he built a laundry, 1889, on Mill Street. His best customer was the Loomis Sanatorium, now the Loomis Village and Dr. Grant's hospital.

R. T. Humphrey built a grist mill, where the Appliances and Furniture Store now stands on South Main, later owned by Cash Bonnell, a small pond over a stream furnished water power to grind the farmers' grain.

The Presbyterian Church was moved from the R. J. Sarles residence by twenty yoke of oxen (Newton Clements' account) to the place where it is now located. The present church yard was bought from Mr. Morton, a novelty store was there. By subscription, \$3000 was raised to pay for it; no trouble to raise the money either. The church parsonage was located where Spencer Ramsay's Funeral Home now stands.

The Dr. Webster place is now the location of a motel.

The Edgar Holtslander place on the corner of Lake and Main Streets is now the Liberty Diner.

The Dan Whickman Livery Stable is now the Liberty Laundry.

On the Mansion House lawn, corner of John and Main Streets, where they rented to a show for 5 cents a seat, now stands the National Bank. Ed Grant was the first president.

The Poelman Hotel is now Sabloff's Store.

The new Post Office on Chestnut Street is across the street from the Sherwood residence, now 5 stores are located there.

The Episcopal Church was formerly a harness shop owned by Rufus Garrett; an office building is there now.

The Wallace Kilbourne Place on 9 Maple Street sold to Nathaniel G. Gorton and later to George Mauer, is now the New York Telephone Company brick building.

The Dr. Charles S. Payne place is now the Woolworth Store.

The Chandler Young building known as Young Messiter Dodge Store is now the Sullivan County National Bank, formerly located on the corner of Law and Main Streets. In 1893 Chandler Young, the president, used to drive to Monticello before this bank came into being to cash the businessmen's checks several times a week. \$5000 was required to start a bank. The moneyed men bought shares which later sold for \$375 a share which cost only \$100 at the time per share. This bank stood on the old Liberty House location and across Main Street was built the new Liberty House, which burned at 5:45 PM April 11, 1926.

The Liberty Union School House burned and a new school was built on the John Darbee estate for \$60,000 and later a wing for recreation at a cost of \$200,000 was built.

On Academy Street stood the Liberty Normal Academy. The Hall House on this location, a new brick front was added and is now called the Lenape.

The Municipal building was built where N. Jennings Harness Shop stood.

The Lennon Hotel, across from the O & W Depot is now the Livingston Manor Lumber Company. The Ontario and Western Depot burned October 17, 1898. The Lancashire Inn burned August 20, 1920. The Wawonda Hotel burned May 9, 1898. Lake Ophelia Pavilion burned in 1912. The Roswell A. Monroe residence was on the corner of Buckley and Main Streets where now stands the Elks Home.

The New School on Buckley Street at a cost of approximately \$3,219, 755 bond issue will open in September 1963. This 37 acres was known as Kirk Champlin Misner estate.

A fire started in a little building back of the Hasbrouck Block and some trash caught fire leading south into Charles Morton's Livery Stable which stood where the Electric Corporation offices are. The Green Building only extended up into the driveway at the time and the Music Hall Theater was on the second floor. The fire licked right into the Green Building with a roar. At least 6 horses were brought out of Morton's Livery Stable and the fire raced north to a cement store and Benny Misner's coffee shop, where it stopped. The fire crossed Main Street into the Baptist Church, just a little blaze started near the steeple. It could have been saved in someone went up there with a pail of water. The Baptist Church was the only building across Main Street lost in the June 13, 1913 fire about 4:30 PM. Wm. Feitner Sr. was worried as he had a theater in the building next to the church, now the Town and Country Sportswear Store. A little boy with a hose on top of this building saved Mr. Feitner's theater. The remaining buildings later were torn down to Dr. C. S. Payne's residence.

The Liberty Post Office was across Darbee Lane from the Theater and the rural letter carrier was coached in by the police. Solomon A. Royce was postmaster. Rural delivery started March 2, 1908. Frank Pierson owned the building removed to make way for the new Liberty Post Office across from the Sherwood residence, where now stand five stores.

The Ferndale Post Office owned by Charles Hosie took fire from a little barber shop just south of this three story building and burned to the ground. The little building just north of the building was saved by Fred Gorton on the roof and men below handed pails of water up to him. This fire was in June 16, 1916, just three years and three days apart.

### APPENDIX III

#### MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ABOUT PEOPLE FRED GORTON KNEW

### HARRY ATKINS

Before we had streetlights in Liberty a man by the name of Harry Atkins used to drive a two wheeled gig and a strawberry roan horse to give Liberty their first streetlights—these little tin cans with a wick in the center. He would trim the wick and refill with kerosine every day just before nightfall and the little horse would go like blazes and stop with a jolt just at the right time. It would be 1892 as I was 14 and worked for Aunt Cynthia Ernhout. Harry Atkins also used to raise several different colors of sweet peas and bunch them and sell to city ladies. They peas must be the same color as the girl's dress. He made a pretty penny those days. He had no competition. He also had a popcorn machine on Main Street in the boarding season and took it to Loch Sheldrake on several occasions.

### METTA BARTHOLOMEW (Mrs. Steve Harrison) (d. Feb. 15, 1939 at 67)

Stephen Harrison married Metta Bartholomew. He lived at Monticello before the marriage in the home of Orrin and Henrietta Van Kuren and they recommended him to Billy Bartholomew at Homer, N.Y. Metta was really an old maid and when she lived at Ferndale, N.Y. attended the temperance meeting at the Free Methodist Church and spoke her piece saying that the lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine. Mr. Harrison was a known boozier, but kept straight at Billy Bartholomew's home and in due time made Metta to believe he was cured of the liquor habit, so Metta went on a trip with him and married him, didn't even have a public wedding. As time went on Stephen kept his toddy in bottles in the barn. Metta's mother, Anthy, a very religious woman, found out (caught him having a swig as she sneaked up on him in the barn) and told her daughter she couldn't even sleep with him any more, but they met in the barn occasionally when Anthy was busy in the kitchen. Anthy died and Metta followed in a month with painful sores just like Job in the Bible. She left Stephen \$1500 and he drank himself to death in five weeks.

### BENGEL FAMILY

John Bengel was born in Maxdorf, Bavaria in 1843 and died October 5, 1916 @ 72 years 10 months. He married Catherine Kraft (1852-April 26, 1946), daughter of Lewis Kraft and Christine Leicht of Callicoon Center. He had three brothers and one sister in Germany and one brother, Andrew (d. 1913) in Liberty. His children were Abbie K. (m. Jesse E. Morgan), Bertha (d. Aug. 22, 1967 @ 78; 32 Carrier St.), Charles (d. Sept. 16, 1947? @ 66; farmer on Neversink Rd.), Edward (d. July 22, 1960 @ 70; shoemaker), Frederick W., John Jr. (d. of rabies in NYC), Libby, and Rose (Mrs. W. Kinne). Fred Bengel (Oct. 7, 1874-Feb. 21, 1964) married Cora Calkins (d. June 21, 1912 at 37) and had two daughters. He lived in NYC, then rented the upstairs apartment at 100 Carrier Street from August 30, 1951 until September 30, 1961.

### RICHARD BENTON

Dick Benton married Anna Ishults. He had a fine team of horses and a livery stable and made a good living in summer as many city people came to Sullivan County in July and August to spend their vacation. But Mr. Benton was led astray by a loose woman. He took her out real often, with his fine team of horses. She was married soon afterward to Fred Thumann. Then Anna was found



dead, but at the trial only circumstantial evidence was found until her purse was found under the wagon seat with a sizable amount of money in it. She took boarders in summer and had her own money hid away from him. This new evidence clinched the case and the jury pronounced him guilty. He was taken to prison by Sheriff Elmer Winner and Walter Lewis. They didn't put handcuffs on him. Dick thought it a huge joke until his cell door snapped shut. He spent eleven years in prison and was released.

NOTE: Fred S. Thumann (d. Dec. 13, 1964) lived at 134 Lincoln Place, which was later bought by Fred Gorton's son Russell. Mrs. Thumann died December 13, 1944 at 63.

#### JOHN D. BUCHANAN (1848-1923)

Mr. John Buchanan drove a two wheeled gig past our farm every morning to take his daughter Nellie to Liberty Union School to educate her for a teacher. He owned a small farm over a mile below the Gorton farm. It was five miles each way for forty weeks school term. Mr. Buchanan kept several breeds of hen which he took to the county fair at Monticello. He was also judge of poultry at the fair and took the first prize in many breeds. Nellie later taught at the Strongtown School. She married Fred Sanford and had one daughter. Irving Sanford, Fred's brother, never married. He became discouraged as his brother and him didn't get along together on the farm. One morning, very early, he got up and started the motor of their car and fixed a blanket like a hood around his head and laid down next to the exhaust. This was before milking time. The electric company was asked to come and revive him. They sent two men but it was too late. His face was black from the fumes and rigor mortis soon set in. He left \$12,000 which was in his name.

#### ROY L. CARPENTER

b. Woodbourne March 1900; d. July 4, 1952 @ 52; m. Nov. 3, 1926 Ruth Eronymous  
Mr. John Carpenter lived at Hilldale and kept boarders at the Hilldale House. When Roy was a baby his mother was so busy with the boarders she let the boarders care for little Roy. In fun they would toss him up in the air, but one day someone missed catching him and he fell to the floor and got a broken hip. Roy wore crutches until he was 10. Then his parents moved to Canada. Roy threw his crutches away while there. His father died and they moved back to Liberty. Roy started to work for the elec. co. as a janitor for six years, then was meter reader until he died. He had a heart spell and the doctor said he would never work again. He got a little better so he decided to show them he could work, so he went out in the yard and fell dead. He had a sister named Pearl.

#### CARR FAMILY

The David Carr place joined my father's place to the south, and was known as the Squire Devine Place. Later, Charles Hosie bought the place and he became Postmaster at Ferndale, N.Y. He had one child, Clara Hosie. Dewey Carr now owns the property of which the Strongtown school was a part, also known as the Clark Gorton farm. I served mail to Frank Carr who lived on the Ruben Huntington place in the years of 1908-1917. Dewey Carr was born in the year 1898 when

Admiral Dewey was prominent when we were in the war with Spain and took the Philippine Islands. I used to feed my horse at Carr's place. Dewey married Hertha Tripps and their first child was born there. I bought strawberries from Dewey as I was the rural carrier and came by their house. No doubt this was his first business deal but he has gone far since that time. He bought the Clark Gorton farm below the schoolhouse and started a milk route with Guernsey cows. The new modern Thruway took most of his meadows so he bought Will Ratcliff's farm. He enriched the meadows with lime and 60 loads of manure. He took down the stone walls to make room for raising crops on a larger scale. Also he repaired the house there for a tenant to live in, made the barns up to date and as of today (1962) he is milking 100 cows and selling the milk. He is perhaps the most progressive farmer in Sullivan County. He also has a large hen house and sells eggs, cream, and cottage cheese on a regular route. His daughter Edith Ruby was born Oct. 15, 1914 and his daughter Grace Pauline Nov. 2, 1916. He allowed Will Ratcliff to live in the house until he died rent free. When Will saw the big crops of hay, millet and potatoes he told Dewey that he thought he should have some of the profits!

#### CARRIER FAMILY:

Mary Carrier's farm, where Fred Gorton worked for a time and where he met his future wife, was later the site of the Empire Hotel, which places it on the Barton road, off Carrier Street. The hotel burned down in the 1960s. On September 11, 1917, the Mary Carrier place burned to the ground at 4 AM. Mary E. Carrier herself, an old maid, died June 23, 1923 at the age of 66. She was the daughter of Albert Carrier, who died Aug. 2, 1905 at 80 when he drowned in a pond. Their relationship to Eber Carrier is unclear from Fred's notes, but Eber d. Mar. 16, 1949 @ 89. In 1935, Eber had a 275 acre farm at Cortlandt, NY. His son Ted d. May 22, 1967 at 68. The present day Carrier House Bed and Breakfast is the house formerly owned by Eber Leslie and Gertrude Evans Cooper on Carrier Street. This is identified as the Clark place by Fred Gorton but the Clarks, who also owned the property Fred bought, had bought their land from the Carriers. A Henrietta Carrier (d. Feb. 22, 1949 @ 76) married Orin Van Kuren of Monticello (d. May 9, 1936)

#### CLARK FAMILY:

John Clark a rich stevedore built a dam on the Mongaup Stream for his son William who married Ophelia Stoddard, a very pretty girl, as a livelihood for them. The lake was 250 feet wide and a half mile long, they had a dozen boats for hire and a dance pavilion as thousands of summer boarders came up from the city for two months for their vacation. In winter there was ice skating for the Liberty young people to enjoy, and a bar. Lake Ophelia was the name. The pavilion burned down in 1914. Many years later a four lane highway was built and went through where the lake used to occupy. William H. Clark b. 1894; d. Upper Montclair NJ Oct. 11, 1915. His wife, Ophelia Stoddard, was the sister of Cora and Hannah Stoddard. Will and Ophelia had a son, George, b. 1904.

#### COOPER FAMILY

George Cooper, Sr. (1840-1908) and his wife Mary had a farm of 90 acres and a living spring 300 feet to the east. They installed a sweep pump in the basement. They kept summer boarders. Their house was three stories and they needed a new barn to stable six cows and a team of horses. Mr. and Mrs. Cooper reared eight children, but by the next season their cash was gone so they borrowed a thousand dollars from my father, N.G. Gorton at 6% and paid the interest at the end of the season, but paid nothing on the principal for thirty years. The farm was sold for \$5000 after his widow died, leaving \$4000 to be divided by five children still living. The man that bought the farm built a large hen house three stories high next to the spring and is doing a thriving business in eggs and chickens.

Eber Leslie Cooper (d. May 12, 1960@79) married Gertrude M. Evans (b. Sept. 10; d. May 22, 1968 @ 85). She had a sister, Edna Evans. Less and Gertie Cooper were lifelong friends of Fred and Daisy Gorton. Their daughter Mary inherited the house and sold it to live in a smaller one on Hope Street until her death. She never married. She received a copy of the 1980 version of *Life of a Plodder* and was amused by the picture Fred painted of her mother as a "hammock hopper." George Cooper d. July 14, 1950 @ 71; b. May 27

Howard Cooper d. Nov. 30, 1956 @ 71

Ida Cooper d. Nov. 1944 @ 84 in Jeffersonville; m. James H. Taylor (d. Dec. 12, 1939 @ 70); kept boarding house

Lloyd Cooper b. Nov. 27, 1886; d. Dec. 8, 1936

Marshall Cooper d. Dec. 23, 1933

Martha Cooper d. April 18, 1942 @ 76

Mary Ellen Cooper d. Nov. 1921 @ 53

Minnie Cooper d. Sept. 25, 1930 @ 56 m. William S. Wood

Phoebe Cooper (Mrs. Able) (1864-1944)

Roy Cooper d. Jan. 5, 1954 @ 71

William Cooper d. @ 77

#### PETER COUNTRYMAN

b. June 7, 1894; d. Nov. 6, 1950

m. Lucy K. Wiwood (d. Aug. 5, 1963 @ 70)

The Sullivan County Fair Association advertised for a couple who would get married on the fair ground. They would pay the \$50. He wanted the money to go on their wedding trip but the money wasn't paid until October. Electric company employee.

#### CHARLES B. CRISPELL

d. Feb. 27, 1951 at 72

m. Nora A. Harris (d. Nov. 16, 1968 @ 85)

Charles Crispell came from Red Brick school and was head cock of the roost there but found out the Strongtown boys could fight with more skill than he. He fought with Alvin Gorton. It was a draw. Charley gave me a black eye the first fight but with boxing gloves us boys got quite proficient in boxing, but Charley didn't know it, so my last fight I clobbered him so many times in the face I was ashamed to hit him more and called it a draw. Prohibition was on and we had

temperance meetings once a month in the church at Ferndale, New York. Several volunteers would recite a piece or a reading. Two young men had an argument concerning one boy drinking cider after signing the pledge, so Charlie, after being laughed at by Edgar Blackman, stood out in the church hall where it was dark. I heard Charlie Crispell say "I will get him when he comes out," but I didn't think Charlie would strike him. But as Edgar came from the lighted room into the dark, Charlie struck Edgar a terrible blow in the eye. Crispell found out a week later that Edgar was still in bed from the damage done. He gave himself up and called at the Blackman home and said he was sorry. I often wondered why the father didn't throw Crispell downstairs when he came to see Edgar in bed. That was the end of our Temperance meeting. At Charlie's funeral in the Strongtown Church all the seats were filled.

#### WILL DAVIS

d. 1966 @ 89

Will Davis married Jennie Gorton my cousin (one of John G. Gorton's children, although she is not listed in the 1880 census) and three weeks later lost his hand between the bumpers on the O & W Railroad. They bought a restaurant and prospered.

#### JAMES DEMEREST

James Demerest lived alone. One could call him a recluse. He kept a horse and 2 or 3 cows and a dog. He made cider mostly to treat his friends. He ground the apples by horse power, tied the horse to a 12' pole and the horse went in a circle of 15' in diameter all by itself. He used to butcher pigs for the farmers in the neighborhood. Jim told dirty stories to the young boys. Somebody burned his house down while he was gone to Ferndale to get supplies. He wore felt boots with rubbers, 3 buckles on a snapped arrangement. He made a room in part of his barn. His neighbors built a small house for him. After a few years he was found dead in the yard and his faithful dog wouldn't let anyone go near the body, so somebody shot and killed the dog. A very dense hemlock forest was in the back of the 40 acre farm and a still came to light but was destroyed by the authorities. The rural delivery went past daily but Jim didn't have any mail box nor did I ever have a letter or paper for him.

#### THOMAS DEVINY

d. Nov. 2, 1915

Being red headed and very homely, few wanted his company. One time the young folks were at the Huntingdon school house and had speaking of the old pieces as school recitations. Willis Cooley (buried Nov. 11, 1949) asked Tom if he would be offended if Willis pointed his finger at him saying that red headed fellow over there. Tom said he wouldn't care. So Willis spoke the piece "How we liked the teacher" and it went on how Tom stuck out his foot and spilled the pail of water. Willis pointed at Tom and waved his hands, telling how the teacher caught him by the seat of his pants and whirled him around and around until he bellowed like a calf and then let him drop. Tom used to call on a widow, Mary Simmons, as long as he had any money. Then she held him down and had the police come and get him. Poor Tom got drunk and was going down

past Bonnell's Feed Store and along came a car. Tom stumbled in front of it and was killed, the end of a friendless young man of thirty years.

#### DEWITT FAMILY

Three schoolmates who were older than I at Strongtown School District #17 were the DeWitts. George went to work on the railroad at an early age while Miles and Frank stayed on the farm, which is now the Queen Mountain House, a half mile east of the schoolhouse. Also their uncle Horatio Smith (September 18, 1854-Aug. 14, 1939) lived with them. Horatio had a little wagon and drove a team of goats in harness with lines just like a horse team. Horatio was a cripple and sat with his legs off to one side, but he lived to be 84. He died at Mrs. Mamie Benton's in White Sulphur Springs. Miles and Frank DeWitt walked from the farm to Liberty Falls depot to the O&W shanty to work on the section under Jack Burke. Their father died before that time and the mother died perhaps a couple of years after Miles and Frank worked on the section at 90¢ a day for a 10 hour day. Anyway, the mother lay dead at home and Miles and Frank kept on going to work until the day of the funeral. At quitting time the day before they asked Jack Burke for the next day off to attend it. Jack said yes, but he was so mad he fired both of them for their action.

#### ROY DODDS

b. 1896

In July 1904, three boys took a swim in the Mongaup Stream at Ferndale. The brook was deep and neither of the boys could swim. Fred Herst the blacksmith heard a cry for help. He dove in the deep hole under a rock and rescued Roy Dodds, but the two Colgan boys were dead. I saw Roy Dodds two days later and asked him how he felt when he came to from the water. He said he heard the birdies singing but would not tell me more. He was eight years old at the time, and had three sisters. The two Colgan boys were much younger. Their father, Thomas Colgan (d. Jan. 24, 1918) had a hotel in Ferndale where the young boys used to congregate and play cards. Another stream joined the Mongaup there where a waterfall of 12' dropped down. It ran past Tom Colgan's liquor joint and there was also a dance pavilion at the top of the falls, also a tannery.

#### CHUCH DONAVAN

As I recall it the Only brothers had an argument with Chuch Donavan over the stealing of some goods belong to Donavan. Anyway, Donavan chased the two brothers into a thick woods in back of their home in the vicinity of Middletown with his rifle. The boys hid behind a large tree but as they appeared one at a time, Donavan shot both of them dead. Donavan skipped west to California but after a few months he began to worry about his wife and young child. He wrote to a friend in Middletown, one he thought he could trust, and inquired about his loved ones and signed his initials C. A. D. He said to write to him using a fictitious name, John Brown. The Pinkertons waited in the post office until Donavan called for this letter in the general delivery mail and took him back to Goshen jail to stand trial. I never knew what his sentence was but this was about 1890.

### SHERMAN ERNHOUT

d. July 11, 1938 @ 73

m. Lila Johnson (d. March 31, 1945 @ 81)

Owned Livingston Manor Lumber Company. "He got a man of little worth to buy a farm for him. Handed him two thousand dollars for the first payment on John Bennett's farm with an agreement in three monthly payments from date to pay the balance in cash. \$3000.00. The deed must be there at the closing ready for the lawyer to fill out the names on the deed, which was the name Sherman Ernhout, not Mr. X. Mr. John Bennett asked his layer if it was safe to get the easy money as Mr. X had no account. He said get it. Mr. Bennett signed the deed and didn't even see Sherman Ernhout's name instead of Mr. X on it. It seems no easy money came to John Bennett. This farm had a large number of hemlock trees and Mr. Ernhout hired men to cut logs—nine thousand dollars worth in lumber. This farm also was to be flooded to make a dam on a reservoir to furnish New York City with much needed water. A flume 27 miles long 20 feet in diameter drilled into rock under ground cost many million dollars to build. The dam was 70 feet high and a road 2 cars wide to travel on. Many new roads were built on higher ground to replace the flooded roads. The village of Neversink was bought off and Mr. Ernhout got ten thousand dollars for his new farm." [Editor's note: elsewhere Fred says \$5000.]

### MARVIN GARDNER

Marvin Gardner a rural carrier from Hurleyville was driving an ambulance and came to a bridge near Loch Sheldrake and a freak accident occurred. The wooden rail was split and Mr. Gardner was struck through the chest with the sharp end and pinned there, but didn't die. He was married to Sadie, and she had lost her voice some years ago but a fire occurred one evening while he was alive and in New York City and she got very excited at the fire and began to holler very loudly. Knowing she could talk, she ran home and called him on the phone for an hour. She can still speak but her voice is husky.

### RALPH GEROW

Ralph Gerow went up in an airplane and came down in a parachute on Clements Hill. A large crowd was there to see him land. The aviator pushed him off the wing as he got cold feet as the story goes. He never tried it again.

### COLLINS GORTON

Collins Gorton went to the army and left a wife and five children. James was the baby, one year old, and Grandma Gorton and Aunt Elmira took him until he was seven. Then my father and mother brought him up until he was 21 years old. Then James went to Newburgh and took a job as bookkeeper for the railroad. He married Hattie Sarvis. She left him for a year or more, and came back to Newburgh, but she wouldn't tell anything about her leaving him, where she had been, but expected him to take her in. He refused and got a divorce and married Margaret Blivin. They had two sons Kenneth and Thomas Elting. She died when Thomas was seven years old and

James kept house on 96 Prospect Street until he passed away at the age of 86 years. I visited them before their children were born and they took me to the theater. The performing girls had bare legs as they danced, the first time I ever saw such a performance but I enjoyed it immensely. This was before I was married.

#### FLOYD GORTON

Floyd and Fred Gorton were born September 17, 1878 and at this writing we are 83 years, 10 months and 7 days old which is July 24, 1962. Floyd's first job he worked for Cousin Clark Gorton near the Strongtown Schoolhouse District No. 17. He later worked for a telephone company in Middletown, N.Y. pulling line wire under a live electric line. The wire flipped up and touched the high voltage. 5 men were pulling. Floyd being on the end was thrown down and unconscious for a minute, but came out laughing, and the other four men were happy to know none of the men were hurt. Later he worked for the O&W Railroad until the Round House Strike. Floyd being a strike breaker was called unprintable names, and later went to Oneonta on the Delaware and Hudson yards on the wrecking gang and was inspector until he bought a home at Mount Vision, moving from 96 River Street residence. At the Mount Vision place a large henhouse was there, a cottage and barn, eleven acres of land. He sold eggs, had 300 white leghorns, and retired at the age of 63 years. At the age of 41 years he married Alice Fields, she had a girl named Hazel, 17 years and boy named Howard 25 years old by a previous marriage. Floyd used to board with her. She got a sore toe and she asked him to dress it, and as the saying goes "he went up" and married her. Hazel got sick and died age about 33 years old but Alice lived to be 75 years old, after a long illness. Floyd sold the home in Mount Vision for \$10,000 and took rooms with another employee, in Oneonta, name of LaVern Norris, 371 Chestnut Street, there he lived for 16 years and maintained a car for pleasure. June 11, 1931 he had an appendix operation. Russell took me to Wells Bridge after Floyd's eye operation May 20, 1962. Some months before that Floyd had operation for prostate gland cost over \$600 and now was taken back to the Bassitt Hospital for second prostate gland operation in July 1962. Four operations all told to date.

#### SALLY ANN GILDERSLEEVE GORTON

Sally was born. February 5, 1799, the daughter of Nathaniel Gildersleeve and Jerusha Powell. Nathaniel died on October 30, 1840 at the home of his son, James Gildersleeve, in Liberty Falls. James owned the first tannery in Liberty. Sally m. John G. Gorton December 30, 1819. Fred Gorton was nearly seven when his grandmother died on June 15, 1887. "She planted 8 walnut trees on the Farm. Known as "Old Hickory" and today (June 10, 1963) 3 walnut trees are still alive. Grandma was 12 when she put the walnuts in the ground."

#### MRS ARVILLA GRANT

Born on Wildman's Hill, between Claryville and Grahamsville, she lived there until 1923. On her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, December 11, 1938, she lived at George Curry's house on Carrier Street, Liberty and had been blind for three years. George E. Curry d. Dec. 24, 1959 @ 89. He worked for

Livingston Manor Lumber Company and later lived in Unadilla.

#### JAMES GRAY JR.

James Gray Jr. went hunting with a friend of the family down toward Strongtown Church. Young James went over a wall ahead of his companion and the other man's gun discharged with fine shot and caught James in the back of the head. The doctor said in probing the shot out, it would destroy most of his hair in back of his head so he would have to carry the shot the rest of his life. James was perhaps 12 years old. This event took place when I was renting the Gray place about 1902.

#### EDITH HASBROUCK

d. May 24, 1962 at 69 (one month short of 70)

Edith Hasbrouck, daughter of Ben Hasbrouck (d. Jan. 31, 1937 at 71), a plaster mason, and his wife (d. Mar. 1, 1943), when young wanted to get married, but didn't go out with boys much and was disappointed with one fellow who backed out after asking her to marry him. He turned out to be a boy without all his buttons. She went to Binghamton to a revival meeting there and her testimony concerning being a missionary in a foreign country created enough enthusiasm that the church she was attending raised \$1000 to educate her for the mission. She took the \$1000 to Kingston and built a little church. She was the pastor and carried on services for several years. Then her mind seemed to slip. She was taken to an institution for a time, then to a home where she died. [Editor's Note: In one place Fred says Edith's sister Leah m. Adolph Doenick, in another that the sister's name was Leila and that she married Alfred O. Doenick (d. Nov. 4, 1967 @ 74) on November 25, 1915.]

#### WOOSTER HASBROUCK

d. Feb. 8, 1945 @ 80

m. Susan Pierson (d. April 19, 1935)

The only man who had smallpox in Liberty was Wooster Hasbrouck, our first druggist. He had this dread disease about 1890 and was taken to a log cabin at Revonah Lake and nursed by Mrs. Doran, a seamstress. Hundreds of people were vaccinated. The doctors worked 20 hours a day.

#### MRS. LAFAYETTE HOLLIDAY

In 1897, near Monticello, near neighbors of Mrs. Lafe Holliday told police a bad smell was in the air for several days. She was burning meat in her stove and her husband was missing. The police found part of a human body in the woodshed. She was put in jail to await the Grand Jury action at the fall term. While there she became pregnant. It was never proven who fathered the child. Hon. George Carpenter (1846-1920) pleaded the case and remarked to N. G. Gorton "Poor old insane woman." He told the attorney, "Poor old Devil!" Mrs. Holliday was sent to the insane asylum in Middletown. While there she chased another woman with a pair of scissors. The case of childbirth was hushed up and never came out in the county papers.



### WILLIAM HONES

Wm. Hones bought the top of Walnut Mountain May 1886 and built a 5 story house on it. The carpenter work nearly done, it blew down Nov. 18, 1886 in a shower between 11 and 12 o'clock. The wind came from the southwest. Two cottages were built from the wreck. Hub Linderman took one cottage down and made a home on 42 Carrier St. DeWitt Beebe the mason was laying the chimney when Mountain House flew down and was laid up many weeks and was [un]able to work for some years after the mishap.

### WILLIS HUNT

Willis Hunt used to go to a bar just to pick a fight with someone. He knocked one fellow down 8 times, even through an open door, but the fellow wouldn't give up. Later, another night, someone picked a fight with Mr. Hunt only to have the friends of the stranger gang up on him and nearly stomped him to death. Hunt was laid up for many weeks but no scars remained on his face. As of April 28, 1962 at the age of 84 he was still going strong. He built a little cottage near the John Manion place on a new road leading to Swan Lake.

### REBECCA D. HUTCHINSON (1849-1926)

Rebecca was brought up by Mr. and Mrs. George Hill at Ferndale. She married a man by the name of Hutchinson and had a son, George. The man was a stranger who came to Liberty Falls. One day, after George was a year old, along came a sheriff and a red-headed woman who claimed her man had left her with five children. They took him away. Rebecca was so furious she bit the bed post. At a revival meeting at the Free Methodist Church in Ferndale her son George was saved and she thought he should preach the gospel. She sent him to Chile, in Pennsylvania, preparatory for preaching, but George didn't make good and in 1906 became the first rural letter carrier from Ferndale instead. George Hutchinson (1874-1914), who was 6' tall, married Jennie Main (1875-May 30, 1938).

### WINFIELD KINNE

d. Jan. 1933 at 52

m. Rose Bengel (Sept. 30, 1877- June 30, 1957)

This boy when about 13 years old used to call on a girl by the name of Grace Bennett nearly every night after it became dark. His father objected, but he persisted. He got a job at the Strongtown creamery and lived alone at Charles Hosie's place and walked through the back meadows belonging to my father, N.G. Gorton and later got rooms of Drucilla Wickes, which was near the Creamery. He would put wood in the fire and go back to work, intending to have a fire all ready for his dinner, but Drucilla would take the tongs and put the wood in her stove and Winnie would come home to find the fire all out. One day he returned just in time to catch Drucilla carrying the smoking wood in her rooms, so the mystery was solved. A girl by the name of Eunice Wheeler would come there for two or three days at a time and stay with him. Winnie even told Eunice used to like showing her big legs which pleased him very much. Jim Wheeler

had a Dance Hall near Stevensville which now is called Swan Lake. Mr. Swan used to rent out boats for 50¢ for half a day. Winnie played the field and had many sweethearts. One time he hired a horse and buggy of Ed Baker to take out Susie Wheat and when he returned the outfit Mr. Baker noticed heel marks upside down on the dashboard inside the buggy. The heels of Winnie's shoes must have had nails protruding out—a dead giveaway. A German girl named Rose Bengel married him and they began keeping house over the Creamery. Later they went to live in New York and had a store and a milk depot. When he died Rose kept the store for a term of years.

#### ARCHIE KIRSCHBAUM

d. April 6, 1949

Son Clifford swallowed a marble but RFD Carrier Fred Gorton advised no doctor needed, just a double dose of physic, which worked when Fred's brother swallowed a lead bullet.

#### GARDNER LEROY

c. 1913 he defended a murderer named Banks who had killed a man in Parksville 20 years before and run away. The murderer came back after all that time and gave himself up. The case cost the county \$1000.

#### MARK (DUKE) MEDDAUGH

When he was 18 years old slipped between the cars of a moving train and lost a leg below the knee so he walked on one knee and a peg. He carried mail from Ferndale to Stephenville and took passengers on the route. But one night at church, Joe Delmarter, a wiry track hand, tripped old Duke up when he came out of church. Duke was as strong as a bull and took Delmarter to the ground and pinned him down with both arms so Joe couldn't move. Died July 9, 1936 at the age of 83.

#### ARTHUR MEYER

Rev. A. Willis Meyer rented N. G. Gorton's cottage. They were Free Methodists, very religious. He preached in Briscoe 8 miles away and in Liberty Falls, now Ferndale. He had a new three year old colt. Later, one day, he left little Arthur, his seven year old son, in the two wheeled gig for a moment and Arthur pulled up on the lines and the colt ran away with young Arthur toward Monticello. He yelled whoa! whoa! a couple of farm men met the colt waving their hands and stopped them cold. Poor little Arthur was trembling from head to foot. I called on him when he was about 65 years old, asked him if he remembered it. He said how could he ever forget it.

#### AUNT DOLL MISNER

March 25, 1934. My visit with Aunt Doll Misner. Aunt Doll was past 80 years old and stone deaf when I called on her one Sunday afternoon. I had to look in the window until she saw me. She unbolted the door and let me in. We had a tablet and pencil as she couldn't hear a sound but

she could talk to me. She told me all about her two boys, Sherman and Walter (1874-1954). Walter has two daughters. One of them was very fat with a good appetite and doesn't like to wear too much clothing. Her habits are run nights and sleep days, do no work, make her bed every two weeks, complain about her poor health and hit up her dad for money. Harrison Misner was Aunt Doll's husband and my mother's brother. Aunt Doll died October 20, 1936 at the age of 83 years. Uncle Harry had died September 19, 1928 aged 88. After Uncle died, Aunt Doll collected a mortgage of \$2500 and her son Sherman and wife lived in her home. Sherman lost his left arm in a railroad accident. He took a job as switchman at Fallsburgh. Sherman wanted that money and they shut her up in a room for several days but she wouldn't hand it over. Sherman died Nov. 13, 1934 at the age of 62.

#### LAVERNE MISNER

d. Dec. 7, 1964 @ 73 or 74

Laverne Misner was the last survivor of the Darbee Farm; with a dozen cows she worked the farm just like a man—drove the team, spread manure and all. She attended every antique auction, drove her own car, took no advice from nobody. Her house was large, eight rooms, where she stored her antiques of every kind. She made a ditch to install the village water which run right past her farm from the reservoir above. She slipped in the ditch before the pipes were laid and broke her hip and was taken to the hospital. After three days she died. Her estate was large. A relative from California conducted the auction. The antiques brought top prices, some \$3000 it was said. Five spinning wheels brought \$50 each. It was learned the Darbee estate all went to a cousin in California. Not a nickel to the Presbyterian Church in Liberty of which she was a loyal member. Quite a few friends were peeved in not getting a hand-out. No will.

#### MIKE NOETH

Mike Noeth liked his toddy and told of his affairs when he was a little tipsy, just to make the other boys laugh. He took his sweetie to the dance when he was about 21 years old and found when he woke up next morning his sweetie was lying in bed with him. She told him they got married the evening before. He said he didn't remember anything about a marriage, but agreed it must be true. They started keeping house and she kept him under control for many years. He was a lather by trade and earned a good living. He built a new home on a large lot and a henhouse in back. He kept a dozen hens and thought someone was stealing the eggs so he bought a shotgun. One day he got home real early and saw a man leaving the henhouse. He took the gun, loaded with fine shot, and blazed away. The man lost so much blood he died in 2 or 3 days and Mike was sent to the lock-up. Two little boys went there to see him in 1896 and asked him how it happened. Mike said, "I only hit him once. I hit him in the leg."

#### THE THREE DR. PAYNES

Dr. Charles S. Payne died of apoplexy Dec. 12, 1917 @ 56. His wife Lillian died July 5, 1955 at 92. Dr. Luther C. Payne died of heart ailment on May 16, 1935 @ 58. He practiced medicine 33 years. Dr. Demming S. Payne was born September 27, 1904. He married Ruth Armitage

December 31, 1935. He died in For Lauderdale, Florida on March 15, 1962 @ 57 while playing golf. He practiced medicine 30 years. Nearly 500 people attended his funeral at the Liberty Methodist Church. His children were Pamela, Deming, Luther, John A. and Timothy.

#### HANS RAYMOND

Hans Raymond when a young man would take a dare just to show the boys he was smart. The young men collected at Jim Demerest's farm one evening told Hans they could drink him drunk under the table. He accepted the challenge. Glass after glass Hans drank to match the other boys. But the boys poured their cider down their front as they turned their backs to him. He never caught on, so he was taken short and mussed his pants, just the thing the boys had planned would happen. Another time Hans bragged how he could lick Dave Bennett with one blow. Dave was a peaceful boy the same size as Hans, so they went out of the Manion Store, which was well lighted, and squared off. Hans said to Dave, "You can't slap my face too quick to suit me." Dave struck Hans and gave him a black eye. Hans told his father the boys had an apple fight where the car was loading to be shipped to the mill. Will Filch had a scrap with Hans. Took him down and said "I've forgotten more about fighting than you ever knew." 1898 was the time.

#### FRANK RYDER

Frank Ryder and W. Breakman attempted to board the front end of a moving caboose but Frank missed his hold and his leg was crushed above the knee. He was about age 28, c. 1882.

#### WASH SMITH

Better known as "Honey Bee Smith." June 30, 1934: A skip of bees came to us at one o'clock today about the size of 5" in the center and 12" long to a point in the spruce tree in our yard. I called Wash Smith. The bees crawled on his bare arms but they didn't sting him.

#### ROY STEENROD

living in Florida 1968; m. Mattie Birmingham (d. Feb.5, 1957 @ 73)

Roy was a postal clerk. His two sisters had a store on Main St. Later he was elected treasurer of the Presbyterian Church for 20 years and an elder. He married a rich lawyer's daughter, the belle of the town. Later he was appointed Game Warden of Sullivan County. Both sisters and his father died early. Fred Gorton was his uncle on the Steenrod side. His father, Levi, and Fred's wife Daisy had the same father, but Roy would never call him uncle. Levi Steenrod (d. Sept. 9, 1918 @ 61) married Ida Grant (d. Aug. 3, 1955 @ 91). He was a blacksmith in Liberty.

#### STRONGS OF STRONGTOWN

In the vicinity of Strongtown school lived three families named Strong. Cyrus Strong lived on the Joel Crispell place. [Note: entries in Appendix I state that Joel Crispell moved to Cyrus Strong's on September 28, 1887 and then that Eber Strong and his wife moved into part of Joel

Crispell's house in 1894] His nephew Alfred lived just below the MacDonald place, 3-4 miles from Liberty Falls Depot, [see also Appendix I] and Thomas Strong lived on a side road as one turns right just below the MacDonald place. Thomas kept boarders in summer. It was said Cyrus's courtship consisted of his tossing a kernel of corn at Eliza and saying, "Now, Eliza, did you catch this one?" They were very old when the Gorton boys went to Strongtown School. We called Alfred "Uncle Fuddle." He had one son who was foolish. He would sit by the hour with a whip, pretending to drive horses, and flog them severely too. One time they asked him to bring in some wood from the wood shed and had quite a time to stop him from filling the kitchen with wood. Another time when his father was drawing wood past the schoolhouse, he asked Eddie to hold the horse while his father went back to get Eddie's lost mitten. When he returned, Eddie said, "My Lord, Pa found the mitten!" His father was very religious and Eddie would pray and sing in mockery and beat his breast in regular rhythm. Thomas Strong died at 92. He married Martha Starr (d. August 24, 1938 @ 92) and they had a son Frank H. (Aug. 20, 1875-Jan. 30, 1963). Frank married 1) Alice Naomi Seitzinger (d. Aug. 21, 1952) and 2) Mabel Meyers Main on Nov. 28, 1953. His daughter was Ada Laning. His step-daughter was Mrs. Mildred Faulkner. Charles E. Strong (d. Jan. 8, 1968 @ 89) was a Ferndale resident for 37 years. His wife d. Oct. 2, 1916 at 32. His daughter was born in 1911. S. L. Strong d. Nov. 19, 1915 @ 77. He was struck by an automobile. His wife and daughter survived.

#### NETTIE WARD

Nettie Ward taught at least three generations of children at the Liberty School. She was due in three years for a teacher's pension. [She taught 8<sup>th</sup> grade when Fred attended Liberty School in the early 1890s.] When the churches had revival meetings, she told pupils to seek Christ and in the school room too. She lost her mind and shot herself after teaching for many years. It is believed her worry over this (retirement) plan caused her to commit the act. I suppose there are some teachers today that are inclined the same but refrain. After her funeral a hundred or more school children followed the procession to her grave. I think she died in 1906 at the age of 56.

#### MRS. DAVE WATSON

In the year 1887 a widow, Mrs. Dave Watson, made the mistake of having two men callers. She was a mother of three grown children. She lived upstairs over Mutting's Bar Room which is the Short Line Bus Terminal location now. Perhaps she got the dates mixed up. It happened at 1 AM. Kirt Fisk was single and warned John Wales if he was seen there he would be shot on sight. John Wales was married and had no business there anyway. Mr. Wales didn't heed the warning and started up the stairs to call on Mrs. Watson. Fisk heard him coming up the stairs and met him with a bullet. Mr. Wales fell to the bottom of the stairs and died. We have no record of Fisk being brought to trial. So Kirt Fisk married the widow. Mrs. Watson, in due time, died in childbirth. Not long after that, Kirt Fisk fell down stairs and broke his neck and died immediately. The moral—the wicked shall not live out half their days!

**FRANK WEBSTER**

d. Jan. 1, 1930 @ 54

m. Sarah Rush (d. July 2, 1956 @ 61)

After Frank Webster built his barn with a trap door to pass into the basement below with a hinge weighted for easy control with no half-way platform in case one slipped off the ladder, he was warned that if it caught his head he would be hung. He said it wouldn't happen, but at milling time he didn't come in for supper. The family waited until 8PM before investigating why he didn't come home for supper. Willis Hunt found him. Sure enough he was hung by the trap door wedged tightly on his neck. Twenty-six years later his son Harry shot himself with a 22 rifle. He was single and lived with his mother and sister. She died Mar. 30, 1952 at 56. Frank Webster and his brother Fred had a turning mill run by water power where they made souvenirs for the summer boarders. Frank's brother Fred (buried Phillipsport, N.Y., Nov. 18, 1949) married Stella Kortright (d. Jan. 11, 1958 @ 80), daughter of Newton Kortright. The Websters were nephews of Chauncey Rowe.

**JACOB WILSON FAMILY**

In 1888 his wife was sent to an asylum. Later, perhaps 1892, their house burned to the ground. The neighbors chipped in and got them house keeping furniture and all on a farm; then in haying Vivian, 7, fell off the hay wagon and was crushed to death. John, about 20, took Paris Green for spraying the potatoes. Tom got a bad disease and shot himself. Fanny was killed by an automobile. Daisy married an old man named Smith and had one child, Leon. Smith outlived her but Leon was adopted by David Carr, next to the N.G. Gorton farm. Adrian, 20, married Jim Manion's daughter in Youngsville and lived in Monroe, N.Y. where he was an auto mechanic.