

## THOMAS LEE ROBERTS II

*This is an extract of a diary written by my great uncle, born June 7th 1869 in Islington, London, England, who emigrated first to Canada and then to the USA in 1888. He was the eldest son of Sir Thomas and Lady Lee Roberts, of Bedford, England. He married Mary Ellen Finkle in Lower Shaverton in 1890, and they had three children, two of whom never married (his third child, Ivan was an aviator, and was killed over France in 1918). His second child, Thomas Lee III married Bessie Rounds, and they had three children, Barbara, Helen and Thomas Lee IV (who died 2000).*

*The diary gives an interesting insight into (predominantly agricultural) life in Delaware County in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. ...*

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..... **excerpt**

**CANADA/USA part starts here**

I sailed alone with a ticket reading "Winnipeg". Here Grandpa Roberts was trumps – he managed it all – with my father saw me off on the Guion Liner from Tilbury Dock in London – gave me fifty one sovereigns. In that first cabin compartment were fifty men and one girl (sister of one of the men) who went over the Western sea we call the North Atlantic. At the end of nineteen days we tied up at Levis, the port of Quebec on May 2, 1888. Ice breakers made a way for our ship to get up to the dock. We had to wait for the three miles below at an Indian station – the quarantine officer was frozen in with his naphtha launch and blocks of ice nine feet thick were churned up by the ice-breaker boats and the snow of that blizzard year was every where several feet thick. The habitants were a new breed to me. There were nine children in the hotel man's family – she Scotch and the executive – The Canuck husband and the bar tender and bread winner.

Here I saw my first sleighs and cutters. The horses were the sturdy stubby French ponies. We landed as children were coming to school. They were fine firey untamed specimens, those school kids, driving their own horses.

A second breakfast at Levis at nine a.m. — one on board ship at four a.m. – Montmorency Falls frozen and radiant, Eastern sun slithered across them – Heights of Abraham, plains and citadel silhouette on the horizon – afraid to go with murderous looking gang across on ice to capital city – hung around till two in the afternoon and then took the train to Montreal, had supper at hotel near station \_\_\_\_\_ by demimendaines – beat a safe retreat to car in station as soon as the true inwardness of Café den Beaux Arts was revealed.

Off again at 9p.m., out at Brookville Station at 1a.m. – lost in finding way to town – landed at Hotel Revere at 4a.m. and going to bed slept the clock around to find it would soon be breakfast time of the day after. Such a breakfast: Scotch oatmeal, bananas, other fruit to be had, grilled muscalonge, beef

steak, bacon and eggs, griddle cakes, rolls and coffee – an epic meal – historic menu – every courtesy – bath – big high room, heated. Rates – mirabile dictu, only \$2 per diem. In the middle of the forenoon Mr. Davis, Aunt Emily's cousin came to get me for a two weeks visit, — all managed, I afterwards found out, by the gracious lady many years later to become my step mother.

Well, it was all new – boating among some of the Thousand Islands – going to meeting of the Plymouth Brethern with my hosts – meeting their friends, co-religionists. It made me anxious to be getting on and to my relief, I found I was to be sent down to Mrs. Davis' brother, Tom K. Roberts in Andes, Delaware County, New York, where I could learn to milk cows and drive horses before going to the Western provinces. Thus I left the kindly family after a week's stay, and crossing the S. Lawrence, landed at Morristown, changed at Philadelphia Junction, N.Y. and down the Black River Railroad (now the R.W.C.) to Utica for a stop-over of five long hours – dined at the Butterfield House – hair cut in the hotel barber shop — walked up and down the street till train time – left for Delhi and arrived in the screaming scooter at nine at night to stop at the Edgerton till the following morning. Hungry, I got a snack of souse, crackers, and hard cider in Dougherty Bill's Hole in the Wall – ate on the head of a barrwl of cider – made my way back safely to hotel and room and slept soundly till early morn. An early breakfast and equally early start by stage – two horse drawn, canopy top, three seated wagon – I sat in front with the owner and driver, John Cowan and there were several other passengers and a lot of packages and mail bags. At the first stop a young woman got off. She was the daughter of the house. It was the toll gate house with a bar clear across the road and to me the strangest of sights – a yoke of red oxen on the other side of the bar – hitched onto a solid-wheel wagon – reminiscent of Sunday School pictures of Palestine.

We were going up the Little Delaware, a country I was soon to know very well, for I taught school in the winter of 1889-1890 at the hamlet known locally as the Hook, but officially as Lake Delaware. Now came the long pull up the hill over the divide into the Trempers Kill Valley, and so on down into Andes Village – a parched, dusty little settlement, dirt roads all the way through those thirteen miles by stage – houses box pattern, white with green blinds and a sultry, moth-eaten, parched and pathetic Town Hall that never to this day has been renovated to the good estate it once enjoyed in booming times of the Civil War – for this and all other neighboring communities were stifled and smothered with enormous mortgages and a town tax and lien levied in payments of bonds for a railroad that never came through.

My first call was on Dave Armstrong who wanted a second man. I like the smell of the horses better than the looks of his face. He was a jovial horse jockey who never paid his help. His offer was good — \$18 per month – sleep in room off office and answer all calls – no phones at that time, the telegraph the only means of quick communication. This was a Sahara – a veritable desert of innocuous desuetude.

After dinner at Pete Crispell's hotel, I started down the "Kill" on his direction to take the third road on the left to go to Jimmie Gray's farm. However disregarding two driveways that led to the cemetery and missing another I came to the John Scott farm and found out I was headed for Dingle Hill up which I made good time, pausing to read a tablet memorial for a deputy sherrif name Steele who had been killed in a conflict with anti-rent farmers clad in white robes and masked with heavy sheepskin shakes. I kept on – was I not British? – supposing they did kill sherrifs hereabouts – my time hadn't come – had hardly begun – and besides I was going to be a man soon and then – all a little day dreaming, a halt at Tom Battles' farm (he had married a widow who owned the farm.) I was

off the track a little, and mounted the hill still higher – came out of scrub forest on to a bleak plateau and found Jimmie Gray’s farm and his man “Tom K.”. The two Tom Roberts, had been writing to each other from America to England and back so we soon fraternized. Uncle Jimmie came up and told Tom, who was harrowing in oats, to unhitch the horses and take me to the house where Aunt Tabbie, a dear old Scotchwoman bade me welcome and sat before me a pan of cold oatmeal and equally cold milk. I was hungry, not withstanding and soon cleaned the platter. From somewhere up above, Tom came down in his Sunday best and we started off to look for a job – down the hill to Matt Coulter’s who didn’t want a boy, — certainly not a green-horn – but over at Johnny Whitson’s on the butt-end of the lake, they wanted a man and over there we went. Tom helped milk and I looked on. To supper we went – slept on a cord bed and a husk mattress and next day I made my acquaintance with fried salt pork, very fat, and huge buckwheat cakes, very sour. “No”, said Johnnie, “the wife thinks you are altogether too green.” They needed a man who could milk and here I ran into the American farm idea that the wife (“the Woman” in Scotch usage) had the casting vote. But there was Prof. Gladstone just gone on the farm next to Ira Hyzer on the Kill – he had no man, so over there we went. The Professor had been principal of the village school for many years, had run into snags, been virtually run out and had exchanged his village property for this declining farm. Like all school men he was going to show them how – and he rather thought I could turn the trick, but again the veto was employed from above and beyond. “Wet” Gladstone was dismayed – he hadn’t an oat sown and boys and men were shy of the book farmer, and I spoke his language but with a London accent. Here was a Cockney who didn’t deny it. But again there was a chance – his brother Tom up the Hollow had lost his man and I might do. So after dinner on we trudged up the Hollow past Deacon Bob’s to a nice looking house and rather shabby barns and just as we were turning up the road to the house, Tom came through the barways with horses and sled and our story told, he hired me then and there for eight dollars a month – seven months — payable when summer butter was made. At this Tom K. streaked it for home – five o’clock in the afternoon now and there was Jimmie Gray’s hill in the distance – five miles – over 3000 feet high.

My first mistake, and they have always been many, was to be unable to execute my first command. “Now, Tom y’ere my hired man – take the line off the tongue” I was standing ahead of the horses and he was on the sled. I looked at the horses’ heads – no tongues lolling – A Yankee trick”, says I to myself – “NOO, this is what I mean”, taking the line off the tongue, and what do they call it in your country? “Taking the rein off the pole”, says I. “To be sure”, says Tom reverting in mind to the speech of his educated sister, graduate of Albany Teacher’s College.

And I followed the men and teams to the barn, helped unharness the nags, for that was their classification, and went to the house to be introduced to the girls who spoke a very cultivated English and who made friends with me right away. Then to milking and strange as it may sound I milked five cows that first evening, — never to get above six all summer and Tom and Belle finished the other twenty-one. So with Tom’s commendation, “No so bad, man”, I went into supper of boiled eggs and maple sugar cookies – bread? Oh, yes, homemade – tea and iced cold milk and fried potatoes, but the boiled eggs, three apiece for the men were the feature of the meal.

The evening chores were light – some calves and pigs to feed. We milked out of doors in the cow yard and just let down the bars into the night pasture adjoining the yard.

Well, what to do from seven till nine – sit down on the front steps and talk – the men on the steps and the girls in the doorway – and to learn that first night in Gladstone Hollow that those peeping

sounds I heard were not made by little ducks but by “peepers” – a small frog emerging from the tadpole stage. I liked the man and the ladies also. They made me feel like one of the family and to learn fast to do my best was my chiefest aim. The green bills I laid on the dresser when I went to get the cows to milk blew out of the window – the girls saw them swirling around the house corner. I must learn, they said, that greenbacks were money – some sliver but little gold in circulation – and they helped me garner in the greenbacks – forty five dollars in ones and twos and fives, no tens. I soon learned that my English sovereigns were not current in the States as in Canada – and the Andes National Bank obligingly got them changed at a charge of two per cent.

Next morning I was put to harrowing oats – this was the Spring of the great blizzard of ’88 and everybody was late sowing. And what to do and which was “gee” and which was “haw”, and to cover every last oat as per instructions and not to bark the trunk of the Gilliflower trees. Very rightly, Mr. Gladstone, a tall graying bachelor of forty with a dry humor, went off to fix fence and left me to the horses’ tender mercies, assuming that they knew more about farming than I did, which was true for every now and then, Tom the nigh horse would look back at me to see what I was doing, and then seem to tell old Nell that he guessed it was alright to go on a piece and then wait for further developments. Well we finished harrowing the oats in the old orchard and along about high noon I had it done, covered up the stray oats by hand and waited for the boss to come – which he did. Had I no watch? – well I must have one. Did I not hear the dinner-horn? Is that what I heard? Thought it was a strange kind of bird crying out. But I was all in. I had barked one old gnarly tree with the spring tooth – had got the harrow all tangled up with lines – had been terribly exercised for fear the harrow would flop on the horses’ heels and was generally all tuckered out – unable to eat – and lay on the couch for a couple of hours, after which there were stones to pick up, and later on cows to milk and evening chores to do.

I found farm life one adventure after another. At the end of the month came Decoration Day which is entitled to another full page all its own. It must not be restricted to a paragraph or so. As long as memory remains I shall think of May 30 1888 as one of the big days of my life. It was something new and strange to this London boy to set apart a day for going to cemeteries and decorating graves and more than that, going to church in the morning of a week day to hear an out of town preacher talk upon the meaning and momentousness of that particular day and its devotion. My people, the Gladstones, like nearly all the folk in the Hollow, were United Presbyterians and I adopted their religion and also their politics. The youth of this section of the foot hills of the Catskills had been terribly cut up in the Civil War, the memory of which was still very fresh and sore. There were in every village, a generation of young women deprived of marriage because their young men had been stricken by disease of conflict, and the special orations of the day harped upon the sacrifices the war had entailed upon family and friend.

The man of the hour in church was Judge Albion W. Turgee, a Massachusetts lawyer who made the walkin ring with his inflammatory references and recollections of this awful conflict. As it was then said, like all others of his kind he waved the bloody shirt and harrowed the feelings of his audience by his high appeals and devastating descriptions of the miseries and murderous experiences of the men in the Northern armies. Little was said for the lost cause. The Grand Army Post in Andes was some forty strong at the graves of their fellows in the village cemetery. They were a fine body of men; the ailing, the halt, and the blind were not there. After the emotion and exaltation of Judge Turgee’s oration, I left my Gladstone people and followed the crowd to the cemetery, and there and then, beholding the simple, sturdy affection of these second generation Scotchmen for their fallen

comrades, I decided to be American, and dedicated myself and services as such, little thinking that my second son would be called upon to pay the price of his own and his father's patriotism.

The Chaplain of the Post prayed, the lawyer of the town eulogized, the men planted flags and the girls placed wreaths. In the place of death, Beauty reigned for a day. After that there were races and games, a heavy thunder shower and a leap year party in the Town Hall for the benefit of the church. Altogether it was a day of dedication, an occasion of celebration and a political demonstration of the virtues and valor of the Grand Old Party. So I became at heart at once a patriot and a politician. I read Horace Greely's old paper, the New York Tribune, with greater zest and understanding and in the course of time became a devoted adherent of Lincoln, Grant, and Garfield. My friends, the Gladstones were pleasantly surprised at my sudden decision, for they had suffered grievous losses in 1861-1865.

The leap year party was a joyful change from the funereal note of the morning's proceedings – I recall now that I drew Mate Marx for my supper lady and as to a stranger within the gates she showed every courtesy, for which to this day I am truly grateful.

Next came Fourth of July. I had to swallow hard some of the things said about John Bull, but got over it before the year was out. All of these Andes people were Scotch first and second generations – very little love lost between them and the English of whom the two Tom Robertses were the sole representatives within the radius of twenty miles from Andes. There was at Downsville, just that far off, an old miller's assistant, greatly respected, called English William. I never met him.

The dominie, Dr. Bruce, preached a fine patriotic sermon on the virtues of freedom won by valor on the battlefield as was the case of George Washington and his army; and all the time I was thinking what a villainous old bird George the Third was because I was becoming an American – it was getting into my blood – Valley Forge hurt, More I was to learn that prison ships in New York harbor were not very savory places of detention and then there was Lincoln with his phrase of "Liberty and Justice for all." I knew very well England didn't look at things that way and again I signed up – in my heart – for America and all she stands for.

The three Gladstones were beginning to worry about the winter. What about Tom Lee? (to the girls), certainly he ought to have some more school – learn his American history, geography and Civil Gov't. Yes he ought to be brought down to date on those subjects and finally, after the haying was done, the school-teacher Belle and the housekeeper Jane got busy and secured a place for this hired man of theirs in the village of Andes their market town and he worked for his board with a widow of Sylvanus Bramley and her daughter Janie who had a village farm directly across from the Andes Union Free School from which he graduated the following March by securing a third grade license to teach – good only for one year, and upon which he taught 22 weeks in the District School of Lake Delaware half way between Andes and Delhi. This was the winter term where the boys had an innings. Several secured certificates to teach at the end of the term. Many years later I dined with one of them, Mrs. Frank Landon, in Great Barrington.

Always after the haying came the road making. The boss was pathmaster and the farmers worked off a lot of their taxes making roads. We joined up with the Hyzers. I helped the scraper, Fred Hyzer, held the plow – a mean old thing – and we made over two miles of road in the approved fashion of two deep ditches and a rounding mound in the middle. Even then it bothered me. Why wait till now,

why plow and scrape when the roads are hard and dry? But so it was. And then the oats to cut and bind, — a cradle to make, a swath around the edges, and the horses on the reaper to cut the grain and throw the gavels in quick succession. Canada thistles got into the first field of oats. It was cruel binding. Later on I learned to cradle grain. I could give satisfaction but to mow by hand — that I was never able to do. “Couldn’t mow worth a dom”, said Tom. And he was right. Cork-screw scythes were what they ended up being, after I got through with them. I tried my hardest but somehow the rhythm and balance of cradling was not to be found with the scythe.

**Memories of First Year  
In  
Gladstone Hollow.**

I ought to recount that I saw my first base-ball game on that memorable Memorial Day. I quite fell in love with the game and have ever since been an ardent fan. Also the fire company put on a show — races and pumping and plenty of horse play, but as you may infer, the leap-year party was the thing — the cake I bid in went to Mary Marx.

The next day we went into the hay. We cut enough for twenty-six cows, six yearlings and two horses in eleven and one half days. I loaded and the Boss pitched both ways. A half a day fishing then to help the Hyzers. My boarding place was with Widow Bramley and her old maid daughter Jannie — a redoubtable pair of farm females. Their’s was a village farm across from the school — very little time lost coming and going — work all day Saturday and do chores night and morning — milked five out of nine cows — the daughter did the bossing — a very competent dairy woman — made, packed and sold over three hundred pounds of butter per cow besides that used in the house — good board, good room, much grouch.

Principal Turtelot was the man who restored law and order in Walter Gladstone’s rebel school. A big, ungainly, farmerish man, Graduate of Syracuse University, self-made, of a mechanical turn of mind — sturdy disciplinarian — unconventional personality, — a mark for the reconstructed big boys to go by — sending a dozen of the senior class to college — preparing me for teacher’s exam. Which I passed and upon which I graduated from Andes High School (Union Free School) in March 1889. In that month I began working for Tom Gladstone again, and — joy of joys — it was sugar making time — to tap — to hang buckets — to lash the big hogsheads on to the woodsled with great log chains. All these activities were new to me and fascinating. Here Tom K’s promise of sugar from maples came true for had he not written to me in Bedford about little brooks and water courses abounding in trout, and about nice brown sugar made from maple sap ?

How I reveled in that idyllic picture of rural life in America — now I’d come — not I’d learned to milk the cows and drive the horses — learned about the early colonists and their fight for independence — (didn’t blame them a bit) and now traipsing through the deep snow in the woods gathering sap with the horses, Tom and Nellie, who really knew more about the business than I did.

Right here is the place to extol that Nature’s nobleman that I worked for for two summers (1888-1889) — Thomas Gladstone of Gladstone Hollow — canny, witty and kind. I couldn’t have found a finer man nor a more comfortable home. Farmers, but more than that — Yeomen — cultivated and personable — their word as good as their bond — and a promise extremely hard to extract, for fear of not being able to fulfil the same. And the sisters were of the same stuff — gentle folk without extreme

gentility – generous and charitable in judgement and good to look at. They were gracious to this boy of twenty in their midst. They knew his background and believed in him.

So the summer came and went. The garden was a poor affair. Farmers didn't raise much "Sass", but perhaps we had more than others. That maple sugar and syrup was a luxury – pork in various guises was our usual dish of meat, and pancakes made of buckwheat flour and buttermilk and yeasting from the bottom of the crock made our breakfast, right off the griddle, sir, — flour gravy – crisp fried pork – and eggs coddled, are the things that come to mind at this time and every time.

After our haying and that of our neighbors as done, visits to kinfolk were in order. Sometimes they took me and sometimes I stayed behind and wrote letters home.

### **Memories of Single Life**

My brother Horace came out in the Spring of '89 and took up a lot of my time and attention and it was a source of wonder and questioning as to whether he and I would go to Manitoba – advance guard of the Roberts clan to buy cheap land on the prairie near the lake called Winnipeg – this Grandpa Robert's idea and intention – and then, at the Teachers' Institute at the County Seat, Delhi, Delaware County, New York, I met my fate by reason of proximity and professional interests.

Mary Ella Finkle, a rare beauty at the time, sat three seats away from and in front of me – the coterie of friends beside and in front of and behind her courted favor – later it was found she boarded at the same hotel. The little gypsy girl Bramley who wouldn't look at me in the class-room was her devoted attendant. I really wanted the gypsy and got the goddess. Should I get all mixed up again with girls after the Annie Baxter defeat? Should I give a second thought to this prepossessing girl with First Grade standing and unusual store of general facts to bring to her world? Should I forget the wild rose Bramley for the pride of Dingle Hill? And I hadn't met her yet! At last some teacher girls in joke essayed to get her down to the hotel parlor – she was dared and double-dared she told me later – did up her hair-do – slipped on her slippers and came down to go through – "presenting Mr. Roberts, Miss Finkle"; "Pleased to meet you"; "Dreadful weather"; "What is that? Fire whistle? Wonder where the fire is. Will you go with us, Miss Finkle, to find the fire?" A delay, a buttoning of high top overshoes at which I assisted – great cloud of smoke on Main Street – clanging of fire fighting apparatus, painful mooing of imprisoned cows and Moses Cleveland's great big barn on Meredith Street was all ablaze and undeniably doomed. I was appalled. Nobody seemed to mind. It was my first fire. I knew more about them later on – to wit, those we were subjected to at Ascension Farm School, South Lee.

But Delhi was a long way off from England or even South Lee, and a fire is a fire and the mooing of those cows haunts me to this day – I think the big horses were gotten out. It seems to me there were one or two outside in the snow the next day roaming around the ruins. What hurt next to the agony of those poor cows was the hardness of the crowd – and I found later all crowds are callous, Let me write down here that I have never gone willingly to a fire since then ; the initial horror of that awful first American fire of mine has kept me away – let the fire department have lots of room, say I.

It was plain to be seen that no time was to be lost if this lady of my choice was to be captured. I laid siege morning, noon and night and when her School Trustee a bearded, middle-aged widower, came for her on the Friday night to take her home, I was fit to waylay and strangle both of them. It was not

the devotional attitude of that first love as tender to memory even now at seventy; but it was a possessive, aggressive and intentional attack on the lady's peace of mind and nothing like the traditional falling in love that poets write of. No bearded widower should have my girl, and that was that. I made a date as I stood by the buggy – I would come this Friday, fortnight, and I recall there was no “by your leave” – fate seemed to settle all that.

Well, my school after that was a Heavenly experience – the big boys and girls seemed to know and did know by gossip, via the grapevine and the Post Master's wife, and were for once, sympathetic with an elder in difficulties. These young people had admirations of their own for one another; perhaps that was it. And again Dr. Landon's first wife, Flora Lee who was one of my big girls, told me how the James boy and the Bailey girl and she and the Bouton boy made eyes and wrote notes to one another, of course with the purest of motives!

And this winter school was known far and wide, for those days, as one to be watched — the teacher was a green Englishman – ardent and active – boarded around among the scholars – managed a C.E. society on Sunday nights, all winter, and a debating club every two weeks in the school house. For several miles the Scotch farmers came to the debates and sons of the aforesaid Uncle Jimmie Gray, two of them, one named Clark and the other, Robert, made up a load of men these debating nights and came six or eight strong in a three-seated Democrat wagon to hear what next in the way of wit and wisdom might be offered that night. These “Gray goys” as they were called were hard headed, logical thinkers, stone cutters and masons by trade – and their finished jobs were works of art. Often the foundation of a house was the most artistic feature of the whole. Lower Main Street in Delhi had several of their cellars to illustrate my point. I used to think on this “better a hearth stone than a head stone” and as for their chimneys, they always took the smoke.

To this day the Hook has been a sacred spot – hallowed the more so by the beautiful old world church and manse Miss Gerry build as a family memorial – for this famous family (Elbridge Gerry) had their summer home at Landon's Lake – later changed to Lake Delaware. This Landon that owned the lake was Doc. Landon's grandfather.

And now, after the twenty-two weeks of winter school – prize giving and party, I went to work for Walter Borthwick's father – \$18 a month and board and washing. I stayed just a little while, from March 1<sup>st</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup>, approximately. My brother Horace had come over and I had met him in New York – a woolen oaf like myself when I came to work on a farm with a top hat in my hand – and we got him a job with Rob Young in West Delhi. Horace admired the man but abominated the Missis – I despised the whole outfit at the Borthwick's on Platner Brook, Delhi – they were so different from the civilized Gladstones for whom it was so easy to work and who were pleased with efforts and intentions.

I went from Delhi leaving Horace at Bob Young's and found a job as dock clerk; measuring and unloading flagstones at Cadosia Summit. I boarded with Joseph King after a few weeks with his brother Oliver, and the firm name comes to me as Randall and Underwood of Hancock, N.Y. Later in the fall I began my teaching here, boarding at the Stoodley's in their log ho use, so cleverly arranged, so cleanly kept, — I have always had a profound respect for this family. They were pioneers from an older, established community and their new start in these hard wood timbers was an epic that never failed of my admiration. The father, Willis was the dynamo, — the mother the balance wheel. Two boys, Bert and Howard and a sister Bertha made up the family. This

year saw the family hard at work on their new double-fronted house across the road from the dear old log cabin – all put up in two years time and all paid for from time to time as the work progressed. They lived well and peaceably. The elder son worked at Pearson's Mill store and took charge of the Post Office. Howard, the one I knew better, was a pupil of mine.

It was at the close of this summer's term that I married Miss Finkle in the Presbyterian Manse at Windsor, N.Y. on June 11, 1890, — to repair to her sister's house at Lanesboro and to proceed from there after a brief visit to Walton and Shavertown, — not omitting to stop over at the Stoodley's for a night at Apex, the new name for Cadosia Summit, and a night or two at Nathan Kinches in Walton and thence to Andrew Finkle's – my father-in-law's home at Lower Shavertown. I then went to work for one Andrew Barnhart at two dollars a day and board.

After haying was over we went to Bussey Hollow for a visit and I prepared for my first Grade Examination, which I passed in Walton. This brought me to the attention of the School Committeeman, E. E. Conlin of Downsville, near by and he sent me as Principal to the Long Eddy School.

This, then, brings me to September 1891. We boarded in the furnished ell of the Mountain House and lived here till we moved to Horace McKoon's house in the following spring, and upon Ella's approaching confinement, to Mrs. Dietz' apartment where Beth was born, May 19, 1892, — Dr. Drake of Hancock attending.

In the Fall we moved to Beech Hill. We rented the Robert Neish farm, lock, stock and barrel for one dollar a day, — in the spring after I had taught the Beech Hill school all winter. (There were 17 cows and 20 sheep on the farm). I bought on credit two brood mares with foal. Their colts brought \$80 in the fall. The mothers cost \$199.

Tom was born on February 20, 1894. A very hard winter but I had, in addition to running the farm, taught school again on Beech Hill for 16 weeks, and earned enough to pay for one of the mares. I don't know now where the money came from that paid for the Holbert mare that I bought first. The lambs came early – for three weeks, I never had my clothes off. The ewes were yearlings – I was inexperienced but faithful – going up to the sheep-folds every three hours for the oversight of the nursing and lambing. I saved one lamb per ewe – nineteen sturdy Shropshire lambs – one buck weighing 120 pounds and the average 93. Their fleeces weighed 7 pounds @23cents on a falling market. Compelled to sell our fall butter with the summer make in the late fall in order to pay rent on December 1<sup>st</sup>. We took 23 ½ cents per pound for 19 firkins and 17 tubs – paid our rent and escaped the sore loss our neighbors suffered by refusing 24 cents – holding out for 30 and selling the next spring for 16. Our necessity was our opportunity. (A firkin held 112 pounds – a tub, 56).

Also at the same time we sold our colts at weaning time in September. I had now established myself as cow man, sheep raiser and horse breeder. My father was now sending feelers to see if I would return and work in his office at the quarries. It was well known in the family that I was the favorite grandson. Somehow it would be a good link between Grandfather and Father who were partners in the growing business, who had frozen out Wm. Putnam of the ready money and were finding the exactions of trade very demanding – Grandfather as the Grand Pooh – Bah of Ludlow – six times Mayor – and Father as a defeated Parlimentary Candidate who had gone down to defeat only after he had drawn the fire of the redoubtable Joseph Chamberlain, and all the brewers around West Bramwich and the Midlands.

Father's stand for Home Rule for Ireland calls down on him the Chamberlain ire, and his advocacy of Local Option for the United Kingdom brought the busy brewers down to his bailiwick to balk him, which they did by close margin of 1100 votes – other man, 15100; Father, 12000. Mother and the boys had a fine time riding around in an open carriage and pair – Father had a little private hack – this in the year 1894, I think. I know the financial crash and economic dearth of 1893 was just being felt in the country districts of Delaware County – similarly lambs went off from 5 ½ to 3 ½, and wool (washed) dropped to 17 from 23, and no sales at that. This was the Republican retribution for electing Cleveland again, The banks refused credits – the mills closed their gates, the wage earners went hungry.

So I sublet the farm, expecting to go to England – spent my last \$3 on a cable to enquire having walked twelve miles, round trip, to the telegraph office. With no school to be had in March and a wife and two children to maintain, I moved into a dear old house in Shavertown, doing odd jobs and awaiting the opening of schools in the Fall. I worked quite a lot for Frank Morris – I sold books this summer – easy to sell – hard to collect. I went into training for the job at Syracuse with John G. Winston' agent – qualified in a week – returned with as much money as I went and started in selling "Giants of the Republic". My selling ability was better than my collecting talent – often the fault being that I sold too many at one house. At one farmer's I sold four \$5 books, the man and wife taking each one and the hired man and the hired girl each one. As they were going to be married they needed only one and acted as if the didn't need that so I only delivered only two after all. Some days I was inspired with nerve and gab and then again there were times when I couldn't say my soul was my own. As I remember it I was left with a stack of books that went for what I could get out of the publishers.

Soon school began at Shavertown. I taught two years. Got a boy, Ivan, January 24, 1896, in the old Shaver house and in the spring of 1896 moved to East Meredith after selling our cows and horses. At East Meredith I taught five years as Principal and represented the Committee of schools both at East Meredith and at Delhi, once holding exams for all the grades. I also joined the Oneonta Lodge of Masons during this winter of 1895-6. Beth was now old enough to go to school. This summer my mother came over to visit us. I had a sunstroke in the hayfield and was shocked by lightning. Mother made a few trips on her own but felt the town was small and unsanitary. She called Oneonta civilization, which of course it was in its small way – Normal School. Railroad shops and so forth.

All the while I was gathering data preparing for Life Certificate to teach. Tried my hand at selling Life Insurance (Equitable) – couldn't make a go of it so hung onto my teaching job and stayed in town.

It was not 1898 – another child coming – everything in readiness – a quarrelsome neighbor made a big row during my absence in school over Ella's chickens in his garden – she replied in kind – the baby died – she was very ill when the child – a girl – was born – dead. Dr. Smith attended with Mrs. Tobey a neighbor as nurse. Sister Carrie came over for ten days or so from her home at Binghamton. It took three weeks to get her on her feet. Her grief and weakened condition kept her from gaining as she always had. But at Christmas we had our family tree and then came a fateful letter from England: Would I think of bringing wife and family to England and working in the office of the Clee Hill Granite Company?

And so the New Year ushered in a heavy problem that I alone could not answer. First, could Ella

stand the trip? Second, did we want the children to be English? Third, would the established coterie of brothers and sisters-in-law make it pleasant for Ella? Should we have to climb any social ladders? Well, after an examination by the two Dr. Smiths (husband and wife) we decided that she should stay and that I should go with our oldest child, Beth. Ella was to stay with her sister whose children were big – stay and not be worried with a husband. On March 6, 1899 I put her on the train for Binghamton and I went the other way to New York. I shall never forget the farewell look at the end of the observation car. One thing, there was no inkling of what was in store for us. We were not burning our bridges behind us except the school which had to be supplied with a substitute. There was still our home complete, ready to go into upon our return – my return – for alas I came back almost before I had landed and the tragedy of a widower's life was upon me before I knew it.

We arrived Third Class at Liverpool on the Majestic "Brittania" and went at once to Bedford. I had a bronchial cold and was put to bed for a day or two. The sea air had cleared up Beth's whooping cough.

To Ludlow, to Clee Hill, to Auntie Betsy's at Covelly – to the offices at Craven Place on the works, as shipping clerk. A wire from Bedford in a few days. Had I heard from Ella yet? Strange. Another wire later in the day: "Cable from America. Ella very ill. Come back at once." This was on Friday. The next boat, Brittania, out of Liverpool on the following Wednesday. Took it. At Queenstown, on scheduled stop, terrible crooning unheard by other passengers. Slow passage – eleven days. Long wait ny quarantine – sent wire to send news of how Ella was to dock – no answer. Took first train to Binghamton, Grandma Fenton at the door. "How is Ella?" "Oh, my poor boy she has been dead these two weeks." Then to Smith's at Deyo Hill. Sad greetings – awful tale of three-day pneumonia – sudden departure. "Where is she?" "In receiving vault at City Cemetery. "Next day, with Smith Fenton, the brother-in-law, found her under a pile of caskets – opened with screw-driver – Mary Finkle Roberts" it said. To Shavertown by train – one change at Sydney – spring of hearse broke on way from Hamden to Shavertown – spliced it with saplings. Funeral next day – burial in family plot – big attendance – affecting sermon, Rev. Oscar Shaffer officiating. The little boys had been left at Binghamton. I paid the undertaker and bought passage to England with the boys. Beth was left at Bedford with her grandparents – little boys with me at Auntie Betsy's at Covelry – resumption of office duties – stayed a year – conditions unfavorable – back in America – children with Carrie – I to work at Borden's, Delhi, N.Y. and boarding.

Bought a monument (\$125) on time – worked like a horse – was made book-keeper, then promoted to Ass't. Superintendent. Supt. Laidlaw on the road all the time as master mechanic. I boarded at Warner House – met Hattie Decker, Madame Warner's niece, — match arranged – married at her home at Elizabelle June (?) 1902 (?). Three days Furlough – then to house keeping on Church Street. Tom and Ivan sick with pleural pneumonia in winter of 1903 – Ivan very sick – special nurse. I was promoted to Craryville. Tom went to Stevens Farm at East Canaan, Ivan with us to Craryville. Mother visiting the previous summer at Canaan, had taken Beth back with her. Cause – disharmony of wife and daughter, — reason for Tom's placement at the Stevens Farm. Ivan alone was favored. We stayed at Craryville for six years – made a success. Wife went to keep house for her father on the farm – we bought the farm on time – lost out – promoted to Assistant to Borden's brilliant Agriculturalist, Dr. J. D. Dietrich. Went with him to Chatham, N.Y. in 1909 – stayed at his lodgings – a Mrs. Fellows' for two and one half years – helped him with educational work-amanuensis – sent to West Stockbridge as Supt. Of Borden plant – discharged in Fall of 1913 after two years occupancy. Plant

closed down next summer. I went to Ascension Farm School as Supt. In April, 1914. Mrs. Roberts refused to go as Matron on same terms, six months contract, a position which Dr. Haven, Farm Comm. Chairman offered her. Mrs. Ida Westphal from Lancaster (Mass.) Industrial School, and her son, Gordon, were installed. Seven boys, — three hold-overs from farm management. I taught school and farming. Farmer Shaver resigned — Ivan instituted in his place — Decker Farm in Elizaville sold under foreclosure. Mr. Decker went to his daughter's home in West Stockbridge — rift in the lute. The occasion was the ousting of Tom, a sick man due to bad truck accident, to the House of Mercy. Mrs. Collins convalesced him — great kindness — Ivan and Collins Children very friendly — complete break of marital ties — October 1914(?), Continued contract — Mrs. Sanford Barnes of Lenox very helpful — took first prize for ensilage corn at St. Barrington Fair. — Dr. Haven, second, Founders Day established June 10, 1912. First Field Day in September, 1914. Farm stunts, speeches, sports and tea. A collection was taken, Rummage sale at Tom Hall in Stockbridge. School open on the Farm after Field Day — filled silo — bought two cows — now had nine — Anna, Sara, Cynthia, Eva, Nora, Sally, Ida, Olga and Nellie — some Jerseys and some Guernseys — about half and half, Initials spelled "Ascension". War broke out in Europe on August second. Grain for poultry and cattle became hard to buy — prices went up in the Fall. Schumaker feed became a mixture of everything. Separated milk and sold cream to Dr. Haven of Glenburnie Farm in Stockbridge.

Foot and mouth disease broke out in the East — all cattle driven off the road. Spring term saw seventeen boys enrolled — Miss Ellie took Miss Thompson's place as teacher.

Dietrich system of farming instituted from the very first — first year, corn on sod, second year, oats and peas on corn stubble, third year, grass, (sown in early fall of second year) fourth year, grass with large admixture of clovers. The Dietrich Bulletins which I helped get out at Chatham, N.Y. were followed religiously. No failures or partial failures in the first fifteen years. — After that with changing farmers and changing practices, varying successes.

First farmer after America entered the war and Ivan left was Asa Burdick of Springfield. He staid several years and was followed by George Stewart of North Wales, Penn. Dr. Dietrichs recommendation — an enthusiastic follower of our system of farming — graduate of a Trade and Farm School of Williamson, Penn. Good in dairy, field and garden. In 1926, he left to work in Nettleton's garage in Stockbridge. The old dwelling burned in the winter of 1925 — the school served the Berkshire Cottage in South Lee for the winter of 1925-26. Edwin Gould's gift of \$30,000 built and helped pay for present chief building for 30 boys — opened September 1927 — filled and overflowing when Ed Reisel came as teacher with Mrs. Harriet Swain taking Mrs. Westphal's place as Matron. This lady also had a son with her. From 1930 to 1940 finances of the school diminished but allowed of the building of a new cow stable in 1932 (?), following the burning of our old barn and silo the year before — the building of a detached dairy house in 1934 where Mr. Reisel took a leading interest. It also allowed for the building of a hay barn and horse stable adjoining the cow stable to take the place of the old horse barn and hay storage, which was also burnt. All this when Carl Rogers was farmer and Mr. Ford chairman of the Farm committee and Ed Reisel still at the school. Later in the Fall of '39 Carl Rogers built with the help of Art Williams a machine shed to house farm tools — and a fine addition to the set of buildings it proved to be.

In the Fall of 1939 I was afflicted with coronary thrombosis — collapsed — was hospitalized — recovered — retired and on January 13, 1940 was given a farewell party — presents and speeches — the new superintendent introduced to alumni (46 graduates) who were assembled and reinforced by presents

and speech of Father Whitcomb of Hoosac School from whence Mr. Graves came as the new Head Master of A.F.S. Dr. Dixon who had pulled me out of my dilemma, took charge of me at the party, put me up at his home for the week-end, took me to St. Johnland on January 15. It is at this Episcopal Community that I am writing at the present time.

Closing, then, an account of my life up to the opening of this new chapter, I will add that the home I have here, the surroundings, the whole set-up is very attractive and appealing. There are grown-ups, there are children, there is a church, and infirmary, and a farm and a dairy that make natural the whole ensemble. I am now on my seventh month.

One of the Societies doctors has examined me. I went to Middletown, Delaware to visit the Pells after Easter and spent a weekend came away very happy and refreshed.

Once I have been back to Massachusetts to my sons (Tom) and had a night at the A.F.S. covering in all a week's absence – trip made my ferry from Port Jefferson to Bridgeport, Tom and Bessie meeting and later returning me in their auto to the ferry at Bridgeport. This trip was to celebrate my birthday with my grandson, Tom Lee 4<sup>th</sup> born on my 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday June 7, 1932.

I also made a visit to Mennonite friends in Lancaster, Penn. From Wednesday to Monday – very good time on all hands and going and coming along without much fatigue.