



Gardner Newsletter – In-Depth Questionnaire

Richard Colburn, Sr. (Treasurer of The Charleston Historical Society)

Q. First of all, tell us about your family. Who were your mother and father and where did they come from? Tell us about your brothers and sisters. You can finish up by telling us about your immediate family here in the present.

A. My mother was Eunice Taylor and she was born at the end of the so-called Bowen Hill Road in East Charleston. My father, Ernest Colburn, was born in Brighton on Buck Brook Road which is the old county road from Burke to Canada. I had one brother, Elvin, who passed away in 1995. I have three sisters, all living nearby. My son, Richard, Jr., and my daughter, Grace, each have their own homes nearby in East Charleston. I have six grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

Q. What was your role in the founding of “The Charleston Historical Society?” What are the goals of the organization and your vision for its future?

A. In 1989, when we had the first meeting of a few people and organized The Charleston Historical Society, we had no idea that the society would grow into what it is today. At that time, we had two or three artifacts, no building, only a handful of members – but a lot of interest. A lot of historical items have been given and many people visit the museum each year. Our membership now totals about 200. The 4th and 5th graders and their teachers from Charleston Elementary School come for a visit each year. The goals of The Charleston Historical Society are to “discover, collect and preserve anything that relates to the history of the Town of Charleston.”

Q. Tell us about the first time you met Will and Olive Gardner. What was/is your impression of them?

A. I first met Will and Olive Gardner at the Plymouth Congregational Church in East

Charleston when I was very young. They attended church every Sunday as well as every function that took place in the church. Nita taught Sunday School. Raymond and Adelbert were about my age and were in my class.

Q. You are a contemporary of the younger Gardner brothers (Adelbert and Raymond). Tell us about your memories of them (and of Earl and Clayton as well, if any).

A. Adelbert helped my father in haying one summer. He was three years older and able to do more work than I could and I was envious of him. He knew how to drive the horses and load hay so it would stay on the wagon. We were in a 4-H club. The meetings were held in members’ homes. When we were in our early teens, the three of us sang in church on an Easter Sunday. The church was full and I was scared! Earl was our Sunday School superintendent at one time.

Q. What is your assessment of Lyndol and Nita Ames’ contributions to the Town of East Charleston in connection with their involvement in the East Charleston Church of the Nazarene?

A. Because Lyndol and Nita lived in Holland and I did not attend the Church of the Nazarene, I don’t know much about their contribution to East Charleston. But I do know that they always attended church every Sunday.

Q. As the quintessential Vermonter and a long-time resident of the Northeast Kingdom, what are your observations about the current values that seem to shape the political landscape here in the US? What are some things that need to change and how should we get there?

A. A lot of the values of home and church have been lost during the past years. Religion is no longer a priority for families as it was when I was growing up. When the “Lord’s Prayer” was banned from the public schools, the country as a whole suffered a great loss. We need to get back to the teachings of the Bible in this country.



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EAST CHARLESTON IN 1856

(Reprinted from "The History of a Country Church" by Richard A. Colburn, Sr. 2008)

It was at the 1956 100th anniversary observance that the most interesting survey of Plymouth Church history was presented by Mr. George N. Dale, grandson of the Late Senator Dale. Mr. Dale, then chairman of The American Newspaper Publishers Association, was a former resident of Island Pond. Here is some of what he said about the Plymouth Church and East Charleston as it was in 1856.

"Let's go back 100 years to look at East Charleston as it was in 1856 when this church was built. Along the Clyde and above the valley were many homes, but the village contained only 13 homes, plus this church, the school, hotel, store, doctor's office, grist mill, saw mill, wagon shop, blacksmith shop, a general shop and a storehouse. That totals 23 buildings around this new meeting house."

Alluding to a map printed in 1859, Mr. Dale continues, "That map shows George Cade's hotel at the lower end of the village where the early Seymour Lake road ascends to Echo Lake from the main highway. Harley Moulton lives there now. Next in this direction on the same side was the home of Dr. Cephas G. Adams. On the river side coming this way were the Beebe and Blodgett homes before reaching the schoolhouse where it stands today. Those five places were the lower part of the village 100 years ago.

"Where the road curves towards the bridge were the Fisher home and a storehouse in front of a wagon shop. On this side of the bridge was the Goodwin home and to the rear up the steep hill beside Mill Brook were the grist mill, L.N. Melvin's shop and his home before reaching the sawmill below the pond.

"Next was the present triangle with this church. On the left of the church entrance where the wide road up to Echo leaves no place for a building today was the little office of young Doctor Adams, long since gone with him. Back of the church at the high point of the triangle, was the home of Moses Melvin who had been postmaster in earlier years.

"Across the street a century ago was the

Judevine and Carruth store that soon became Carruth's store. There, Jonas Carruth was postmaster in the store later operated by a long list of postmasters, like John S. Sweeney, William E. Tripp, Charles N. Moulton, W. G. Stoddard, Emory A. Hebard and Jack B. Sloan. Near the store, beside the Clyde River Bridge was the home of Stephen Cole. Opposite Cole to the right of the bridge, was the blacksmith shop. Through the bridge, on the meadow, was the Clement home.

"The four remaining homesteads on the high land beside this church were the Knight place, opposite Melvin, the Tyler home on the near corner, plus the Kathen and Abbey homes across the road from the blacksmith shop.

That was East Charleston 100 years ago. Its crowning glory was this new church that is now crowned with a glorious heritage.

"In 1856 Charleston had 1,000 people while Brighton had 200. The Charleston grand list for taxation was three times that of Brighton, where the new railroad would soon change the comparison. Derby and Craftsbury were the big towns, but Charleston was still more important than Newport. Orleans County had no railroad except for the tracks through eastern Morgan from Island Pond to Canada.

"When this church was built, Vermont was the important 20th state in population among the total of 31 states. Franklin Pierce was the President of 23 million people; 20 million were free, the other three million were slaves. Our Secretary of War was Jefferson Davis, future President of the Confederate States. Vermont had not heard of Abraham Lincoln. In East Charleston lived Erastus Buck, a Forty-Niner, who had come here with some California gold, not realizing that a few years hence he would again return home for burial as the war hero best known in the Clyde River valley. (Capt. Erastus Buck, b. 1830, d. 1864 of wounds suffered in the Civil War. He served for the state of VT, where he was born and was a lawyer.)

"Vermont, like Palestine, was a land of shepherds. Then, as now, we had more cows than people, but then there were more sheep than cows. As early as 1842, Thompson's "Vermont History" reported Charleston with 587 cows and 1,408 sheep. While Wisconsin now shares with Vermont in a predominance of cattle, probably this is the only state which once had three sheep for each inhabitant."



TWO BROTHERS and THE MODEL T FORD and THE MODEL A FORD

BY: Clayton Gardner

Earl and I drove a 1923 Model T Ford to high school four miles away from our Charleston, VT farm. Our Model T was great in the summer time. But in Vermont's 40-below winters, it was nearly impossible to start. We became experts at wiping the frost out of the timer and learned a lot about the coils on the Model T. There were four of them. Each coil had its own points.

The points vibrated with a peculiar buzzing sound. If you did not hear the buzzing, then you knew there was frost in the timer preventing proper contact. But when the points buzzed, a high voltage spark

Continued on Page 4



Image of a Model T Ford

Memories of Two East Charleston Girls

(By: *Teresa Vasko*)

Vinnie Tanguie Johnson – 99 Years of Age

Lois Gardner Cardwell – 95 Years of Age

VINNIE

The family never had a car or horses. They walked wherever they went. Each year they borrowed a car from the neighbor to go to the Barton Fair.

Vinnie went to a one-room school on Echo Lake, a mile walk from her home. To the Congregational Church was a longer walk. When you entered the vestry, the men and boys were on the left and the women and girls were on the right. She remembers that the Gardner family were there each Sunday.

Vinnie recalls Mr. Gardner coming to her home to sell stockings, Vinnie's brother, Raymond, was working at the Gardner place when Mrs. Gardner was pregnant. Mrs. Gardner liked

the name so much she named her baby "Raymond."

LOIS

The Gardners always had horses, but they went to Nova Scotia in a Model T in 1927.

Lois was the only one of the ten Gardner children who went to the same grade school for all eight years and one high school for all four years. The high school was Lyndon Institute in Lyndon Center. Her elementary school years were at the Blake School which was on the Ten Mile Square Road, a mile toward Island Pond. The 8th grade graduation was at the Buck School where Lois lead the band.

One of Lois' earliest memories of Sunday School (at the Plymouth Church) is that when the offering plate was passed, her sister Ruth said, "No thanks, I have plenty at home!"

Here is a list of some of her father Will's sales jobs: Tanner Shoes, Pitkin Goods, Nationwide Insurance and suits. The dentist was paid with a new suit.

The ice cream parlor

memories are a little scarce (another money making adventure begun by her father, Will). The ice was harvested from the Clyde River in winter and stored in sawdust. There was an ice crusher, but Lois does not recall anyone coming to the ice cream parlor. Lois said, "I remember one of the parlor chairs with no seat. Our Christmas tree was always set in it."

Both of these ladies have a brother named Raymond. They each learned to drive on the "Traveling Grocery truck" with the same "teacher" – David Johnson. Lois recalls learning to "double shift" (perhaps double-clutch). Lois dated David, then Vinnie married him. Both ladies spent retirement winters in Florida, staying at the same trailer park.

Now they both spend their days on their decks. Vinnie has a 180 degree view of Burke Mountain and Lyndonville. Lois enjoys a vast view of Lake Memphremagog in Newport, Except for her time in Malden, Lois has always lived by the water – the Clyde River, Ipswich River and now Lake Memphremagog.



Image of a Model A Ford



Homer Johnson and Clayton Gardner beside the "Traveling Grocery Truck"



Captain Erastus Buck, Civil War hero who was returned to E. Charleston to be buried.



This is a great picture for the Lang-Johnson-Eggleston Connection. Pictured standing, four ladies to the right is Edith Lang (peeking over a shoulder), Will Gardner's half-sister. The photo is of Clara Buck's Sunday School class at Plymouth Church around 1910-1920.



Next Generation (from picture at left) Plymouth Church Sunday School Class - 1937. Beulah Gardner is the second person in the first row; Elinor Gardner is the fifth person in the first row; Nita Gardner is the Sunday School teacher and is the last person in the first row. Adelbert Gardner and Richard Colburn are the first and second persons in the third row, and Raymond Gardner is the second-to-last person in the third row.

was discharged across the spark plug points firing that cylinder. That is, the cylinder would fire if everything else was correct.

Another thing that we had to be correct was the gas-air mixture. If this mixture was at the 40-below temperature, it would not fire. We corrected this by wrapping towels around the carburetor and pouring on boiling hot water. Even so, the engine would not start unless it was turned fast enough to build up compression. The self-starter would not turn the engine that fast. By jacking up a rear wheel, we could make the engine turn easier. But still I had to turn the crank while Earl ran the starter.

Sometimes all these efforts resulted in failure. Then we would harness Old Maude, hitch her to the front of the Ford; and while I guided Maude out the driveway and down the road, Earl would steer the Ford, put it in high gear, and after a half-mile or so (if we were lucky) the Model T started. Needless to say, we were usually late to school during real cold spells.

Eventually, Earl thought of a better way. On cold days, when we arrived home from school, Earl would drain the engine oil into an old cooking pot. He placed the pot on the back of our wood-burning kitchen stove. By the time Mama had cooked breakfast, the oil would be piping hot. With hot oil in its crankcase, the Model T usually started as long as the timer was clear of frost and as long as I cranked while Earl ran the starter with a rear wheel jacked. I believe Old Maude appreciated the opportunity to stay in the warm barn.

Papa also had a 1931 Model A Ford. The Model A always started, no matter how cold. So, when Papa was home, Old Maude was spared from pulling the Model T. We would chain the Model T behind the Model A. I would drive the "A" while Earl manipulated the "T." Since the Model A could go much faster than Old Maude, the "T" started sooner. Thus, sometimes we got to school before the end of the first period.

Papa bought that 1923 Model T Ford in 1935 for \$10.00. It was a closed car with two doors, each door centered on its side. The gasoline tank was underneath the driver's seat. Gasoline was gravity fed to the carburetor.

Sometimes when headed uphill and the gas was low, gas would not flow to the carburetor. We discovered that in such situations we could turn the "T" around and back up the hill. So, when backing up the hill, the gas had a downward path to the carburetor.

One day near the end of the school year, our high school baseball team had a game 22 miles away in Derby Line. Earl and I decided to load up the Model T and attend the game. We packed four students (besides ourselves) into the car and headed for Derby Line.

The old "T" was not used to such loads. A few miles down the road, a tire blew out. We carried tire and tube patches and all the tools for repairing tires. The "T" did not have drop-center rims. Its rims were a circular band of flat steel with a tricky catch. It was necessary to use a rim-spreader to remove and to replace a tire. But we were experts -- we had repaired many a tire.

Our four friends walked ahead while Earl and I repaired the tire. We overtook our friends about a mile down the road, picked them up and continued until another tire blew.

In all we had four blow-outs on our way out. We arrived just as the game ended. On the way back, we had four more blow-outs!



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SEE YOU THIS SPRING!!