

Gardner Newsletter

Summer 2018 - No. 83 - Vol. 21



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GARDNER LIVING HISTORY TRAIL
PART III: HAPPY 50TH TO JOHN AND
TERESA VASKO!

Summer 2018 - a Very Busy Summer for the Gardner Cousins

PART I: The Gardner Cousins' Annual Reunion - Roll Call

On July 1, 2018 the Gardner Cousins' summer began by everyone gathering at the home of Rod and Irene Ames in Derby, Vermont for the third annual Gardner Cousins' Reunion. Needless to say, it was the usual great success with everyone enjoying great food, wonderful fellowship, and many memorable conversations and remembrances with family, friends, and guests.

Let's begin by taking a roll call of the Gardner first cousins who were in attendance, these being the children of the Original Gang of Ten, the progeny of Will and Olive Gardner. We'll proceed from the oldest to youngest of the Original Gang of Ten.



(1): *Ruth*. It was great to

see Cousin Ruth Anne Metcalf who was there from Ohio with a friend. Unfortunately, her brother, Dick, and her sister, Geri, were unable to attend.



(2) *Elizabeth*. Cousin Teresa Vasko gave a wonderful reading from the text of a letter from Uncle Clayton

about the Gardner boys' naughty hi-jinks from many years ago. Teresa and her husband, John, are the subjects of Part III of this issue of the newsletter as they celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.



(3) *Lois*. Aunt Lois married Brooks Cardwell rather late in life and had no children. At age 100, everyone was in awe see-

PART I: The Gardner Cousins' Annual Reunion - Roll Call (continued)

ing her at the reunion. By the time the next newsletter is published, she will be 101.



(4) *Earl*. Earl's son, Paul Gardner, your editor, arrived with his guests Joyce D'Antilio and her

boyfriend, Bill. Paul's sister, Jean Gonzalo, arrived on a visit to Vermont a week or so after the reunion and is the subject of Part II of this issue, "Cousins, Cars, and Cows" and "The Gardner Living History Trail."



(5) *Clayton*. Unfortunately, neither Ron nor Brenda were able to attend. Everyone looks forward to seeing them next year.



(6) *Nita*. Cousin Rod Ames, along with Irene, hosted this wonderful event. All of Rod's immediate family worked hard

to make sure everything went smoothly. Cousin Dawnita Ames, who lives next door, attended and eagerly greeted all her cousins and their families. We hope to see Rod's brother, Terry, and his wife, Patty, next year when they come up to Vermont from Florida.



(7) *Adelbert*. Adelbert and Lilla had nine children. Of those cousins, only Becky and Cindy attended. Both

ladies approached the microphone and recounted their adventures on the farm many years ago. Adelbert and Lilla used to live on a parcel of land located nearby and Becky and Cindy have fond memories of living there. We're hoping for a better turnout of the cousins from this family in the future.



(8) *Raymond*. Raymond and Margaret had six children. The eldest of those children are

PART I: The Gardner Cousins' Annual Reunion - Roll Call (continued)

Steve and Gloria who both attended the gathering. Steve took the microphone expressing his pleasure at being able to attend the cousins' reunion and told stories about fishing with Grandpa Gardner. This family had their own family reunion going on at the same time at their cabin over at Lake Willoughby.



(9) *Elinor*. Cousin Nancy Whitney and her husband, Pastor Dan Whitney, worked the cousins crowd in a way only

they know how to do. Nancy put in a great plug for the *Gardner News* website inviting everyone present to check it out. Pastor Dan will be writing the 2018 Christmas message to the family in the next issue of the newsletter. We look forward to seeing Nancy's brother, Dr. Chris, and his beautiful wife, Lisa, next year.

(10) *Beulah*. All four of Aunt Beulah's children attended this year's reunion, so she gets the prize for being the best represented



Original Gang of Ten family at this event. Cousins Lenny, Sharon, Jay, and Sheryl were present along with their fami-

lies. It was great seeing this family fill up a whole tent and to meet new inductees as the cousins' children get married and have children of their own.

So, let's tally it up. It seems there were 14 first cousins present at the 2018 Gardner Cousins Reunion. Let's see if we can beat that attendance record next year! (Be sure to send in any corrections if you spot any errors or omissions.)



PART II: Cousins, Cars and Cows - The Gardner Living History Trail

Here are some pictures of Cousins Jean and Paul's visit to Vermont and Massachusetts a week or so after the Gardner Cousins' reunion.

Starting from the top from left to right: (1) Jean observing cows in the pasture in front of Dawnita's house. (2) Jean and Paul at the ruins of Grandpa Lang's round barn at the

Northwoods Stewardship Center. (3) Selfie at the round barn. (4) Jean and Paul in Rod's 1966 Super Chevette. (5) Jean and Irene. (6) Cousin Teresa at the Lyndonville Information booth. (7) Rod and Jean at the round barn on The Gardner Living History Trail.



PART II: Cousins, Cars and Cows - The Gardner Living History Trail



Top from left to right: (1) Cousins Jean Gonzalo and Sharon Gardner with Uncle Raymond.

(2) Cousins Rod Ames, Paul Gardner, Jean Gonzalo and Dawnita Ames.

(3) Cousin Rod Ames with Aunt Beulah Griffes and Aunt Lois Cardwell in Aunt Lois'

living room in Newport, Vermont.

(4) Newly constructed bunkhouse at the Northwoods Stewardship Center.

One of the best highlights of this visit is the walk through The Gardner Living History Trail which we are about to embark upon right now!

PART II: Cousins, Cars and Cows - The Gardner Living History Trail



Come with us as Cousin Rod Ames takes Cousin Jean Gonzalo and her brother, Paul Gardner, on a tour of the Gardner Living History Trail just up the road from the old homestead at the Northwoods Stewardship Center.

WELCOME TO THE GARDNER LIVING HISTORY TRAIL



This Trail is named in honor of Will and Olive Gardner who lived and stewarded this land from about 1900 to 1983, when it was purchased by Bill Manning and Pat Moyer – founders of the Northwoods Stewardship Center.

WELCOME to the Gardner Living History Trail. As you walk this half-mile loop trail, you will follow the tracks of the first human inhabitants of this landscape. Many changes have taken place here over time. Many hands have shaped the land and many voices tell this story. Use the interpretive signs, your senses, and your own imagination to discover this rich history.

Imagine. What did this land look like when the

glaciers receded after the last ice age? What flora and fauna greeted the Abenaki when they arrived here by canoe on the Clyde River? What changes occurred on this landscape during five generations of stewardship by the Gardner Family? Hidden among the trees and rocks find the answers to these questions. The Gardner Living History Trail unlocks the story not only of this one parcel of land, but also of the evolution of stewardship in northern Vermont over the past two centuries.

This trail was made possible by a grant from the Vermont Community Foundation's Northeast Kingdom Fund.

STOP 1: ROUND BARN



Pop Quiz: *What is the covered ramp on the right side of the barn called and why was it used?*

Answer: Called a “high drive,” this ramp took advantage of a side slope to provide access to the top floor of the barn with horse-driven wagons, allowing the farmer to optimize space and gravity to move hay to the livestock on the 2nd floor, and manure to the ground floor for easy removal.

THE rock work seen here is all that remains of a round barn built in 1908 by then landowner Bert Lang, grandson of the

original settler of this property – Jacob Lang, and stepfather of William Gardner,

Round barns were considered an innovation in farming at the time as they required less building materials to achieve equal floor area, were efficient in the movement of feed, manure, and equipment, and had the extra perk of no corners “for the devil to hide in.” According to a postcard of the time, the Lang round barn was the largest in New England. It was built the same year as the round barn on the Robillard farm in Irasburg – still in

active use in 2013.

The design features of central hay storage and vertical ventilation were handy for drying hay but made the barn vulnerable to fire. Late on Christmas Eve 1918 a fire started on the ground floor and quickly spread to consume the barn, house, and some livestock – lighting up the entire valley.

View of the central hay storage area in the Robillard round barn in Irasburg. Note the vertical ventilators twisted in the hurricane of 1938,

STOP 2: THE LANG HOME



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Pop Quiz: *The extension off the right side of the house connected to something. What was it?*

Answer: This extension was added to connect the house to the round barn circa 1908, making access easy in deep winter snows, but also resulting in loss of the house when the barn burned.

THIS cellar hole marks the location of the Lang family home thought to have been built in 1828 when the site was settled by Jacob and Sarah Lange (ages 49 and 38) and their 8 children. The section on the right was

set above the ground on stones which have since been scattered.

By 1850 the family was farming 40 acres with horses, sheep, dairy cows, and a sugaring operation. Son Andrew Lang took over running the farm; and by 1879 – 1880 had become a prominent business man with some of the highest farm production levels in Charleston (including 1,800 pounds of butter and 5,600 bushels of potatoes) and was co-owner of a starch factory and two sawmills.

In 1902, the farm was acquired by the next generation – Bert

Lang and his wife Amy, who built the round barn six years later. This part of the property briefly left family ownership but was acquired again in 1920 by Bert and Amy's son, Will Gardner, who had grown up here and subsequently raised his own family here. The Gardner children recall many stories of their rich lives here; collecting cranberries along the Clyde River during the depression, cutting timber with their father, raising oxen, and playing in the round barn foundation, among others.

STOP 3: STONE WALLS



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Pop Quiz: Why in the woods? How did this wall come to rest in the middle of a forest?

Answer: In 19th century Vermont, as much as 80% of land was cleared for agriculture. The forests surrounding today's stone walls are a clear reminder that left untended, our agricultural lands quickly revert to native forest.

OLD stone walls are a fixture throughout New England and provide important clues to our past. Often situated adjacent to cultivated (or formerly cultivated) agricultural lands or property boundaries, stone walls were

built by the settlers who first cleared this land. The stones themselves provide clues to our local geology and show how stony our northern soils really are. While most remnant stone walls have suffered the ravages of time, many are still visible today and offer a glimpse of past land stewardship – demonstrating the skill and care with which a farmer managed his lands. Many stone walls were topped with wooden fences to pen in livestock, although most of the wood has long since been removed or rotted away. Often settlers simply piled stones around a tree or near a field edge; and, although they

are less conspicuous than the orderly walls that crisscross the southern New England landscape, remnants of these rock piles can also be found throughout the region. Trees with a large open grown form (photo right) among younger straight trees often mark a former field or field edge and may lie alongside a stone wall.

Looking around, you may find other clues dating back to New England's early settlement period including foundations, cellar holes, penstocks, dug wells, machinery, apple trees, and even lilac bushes.

STOP 4: THE ABENAKIS

Gardner Living
History Trail

Stop 4: The Abenakis



Artwork by Bob Nelson

Across this road, the land slopes down to the Clyde River. It is no coincidence that early settlers of the Northeast Kingdom chose this particular spot as home. The Clyde River provided transportation for hunting, gathering, and trade, and wildlife and plants were abundant in the diverse wetland complex that distinguishes this section of the river. The Clyde River Valley flows 40 miles northwest from its headwaters in Island Pond to its mouth at Lake Memphremagog, providing a connection between the Memphremagog - St. Francis - St. Lawrence watershed, and the Nulhegan watershed-headwaters of the Connecticut River. Today, the Clyde River is part of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, a 740-mile long water trail linking the Adirondacks of New York with the Allagash of Maine, a route that has been used for travel and transport for 10,000 years.



Clipart courtesy FCI

Human inhabitants first travelled through this region when the glaciers of the last Ice Age receded, nearly 10,000 years ago. At Salem Pond, about 10 miles downstream of this site, a Paleo-Indian spearhead was uncovered in 1998. The Paleo-Indians of this region were the ancestors of the Abenaki people that settled the region from Vermont's western border on Lake Champlain to Canada and Maine - each sharing the Algonquin language. During this time, the environment changed from post-Ice Age tundra to a rich Northern Forest ecosystem, supporting more inhabitants. Year round Abenaki settlements were located on the shores of Lake Memphremagog, while seasonal camps are known to have been used as close as East Charleston village, several miles to the west of this site.



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Answer: Called an atlatl, this tool increased the power for spear throwing by extending the length of the thrower's arm.

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STOP 5: CHANGES IN THE LAND

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Gardner Living History Trail

Pop Quiz: What would this forest become if left alone for another 100 years?



Have you ever wondered how fast a forest could grow? The photo to the left was taken at the spot where you are standing about 1958, looking east toward the round barn foundation, with Dolloff Mountain beyond. This was about the time that farming of the fields ended—130 years after Jacob Lang began clearing the original forest.

Look carefully and you may still be able to make out the remains of the two trees in the picture's foreground, which helped to identify this site in the late 1990s. Further up the path, in the surrounding forest, very attentive observers may find the bases of the telephone poles seen in the distance in the photo.



Typical forest development (succession) on well-drained fields.

Annual Plants
Perennial Plants and Grasses
Shrubs
Softwood Trees - Pines
Hardwood Trees

Time →

Answer: Northern hardwood (maple-beech-birch). This is the forest type most commonly found on well-drained side slopes in Vermont, and is most likely the forest that was cleared by Jacob Lang. The softwoods that you see now (white pine, white spruce, Norway spruce) are a temporary forest here because of the agricultural history and other human activities (more to come on that at a later stop).

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Typical forest development (succession) on well-drained fields.

STOP 6: EDGE HABITAT



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Reading the Landscape:

What land use changes are evident in this area? Which areas offer greater wildlife habitat value? Can you identify travel corridors that wildlife might follow?

WHILE undisturbed forest provides important core habitat for some wildlife species, others prefer what is known as edge habitat – the boundary or transition area between two habitat types. Edge habitats (also known as ecotones) often occur where different land use histories meet and typically feature a greater variety of overlapping plant and wild-

life species; and, therefore, also greater opportunities for hunting and browsing. The diversity of ground shrub and tree species found in edge habitats provide excellent cover to help animals avoid detection – particularly in the early morning and late evening hours of dawn and dusk preferred by crepuscular creatures. As a result, edge habitats often provide critical travel corridors for certain wildlife species such as deer, bear, fox and coyotes.

Looking around you may see a number of converging forest habitats: pine forest, young forest

(or early successional) seasonal stream, and old field. These overlapping forest types are of even greater significance where they offer structural diversity such as coarse woody debris, rock piles, brush piles, large cavity trees, standing dead wood (snags), or high value food sources like apple trees or blueberries.

STOP 7: PLANTATION



Pop Quiz: How do you age a pine tree without special tools or harming the tree?

Answer: A rough age can be found by counting each level or "whorl" of branches, because one of these is produced for each year of growth. Beware that some branch whorls may have been removed through natural or assisted pruning, especially in the lower trunk area.

FARMLAND or forest? In the late 1950s, the federal government created the Soil Bank Program in an effort to prevent soil erosion, maintain income to farmers, and decrease the production of basic farm products (which had amassed large

surpluses). This was achieved by paying farmers to take land out of farm production and/or by paying for tree planting in farm fields. Though he had spent much of his life fighting back trees to maintain his fields, Will Gardner embraced the Soil Bank opportunity in 1960 and planted the area in front of you in red and white pine. Other parts of this plantation were planted in Norway spruce. This was a crop that only future generations would benefit from.

These tree species require ample light for steady growth and have been thinned three times since 1960. How do you know when it's time to thin? When the

canopies have closed, allowing very little light to reach the lower part of the canopy. A healthy tree will have at least 25% of its total height in live canopy (healthy needles or leaves), preferably 30%.

Identify red pine by its reddish bark and longer needles which occur in pairs. White pine needles are in bundles of 5 (think W-H-I-T-E), and this tree has a darker bark. Norway spruce is identified by its graceful upward swooping branches and its long pendant cones (6-8 inches). White spruce may also be found occasionally in the plantation and will have cones only 1-2 inches in length.

PART III: John and Teresa Vasko's 50th Wedding Anniversary



The York Street Meeting House in Lyndon, VT



The Gardner Cousin's busy Summer of 2018 rolled on when, on August 4, 2018, Cousin Teresa Vasko and her husband, John, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Their daughter, Cynthia Clark, along with her husband Will, (who live in California) and son, J. J. Vasko, formerly of the Peace Corps and now living in Uganda, hosted the event at the York Street Meeting House in Lyndon, VT.

Built in 1829, the meeting house is the oldest surviving church structure in Lyndon. Part of what made this event extra special is the fact that John and Teresa were married 50 years ago in this very same church in 1968. The organist who played Wagner's Bridal March the first time the duo walked down the aisle played it again

as they accompanied each other down the same path 50 years later. After the procession, J.J. hosted a slide show that highlighted many of the significant events in the happy couple's lives. It continuously scrolled through while guests enjoyed a variety of

scrumptious snacks placed strategically on tables that also contained scrapbooks and photo albums documenting meaningful milestones achieved by this extraordinary couple.



JJ Vasko MCing

Teresa has been a life-long resident of Lyndonville, and many of John's and Teresa's friends were there. Teresa enjoyed an illustrious career in education in the public schools in the area and many of her former colleagues and students gathered together to honor the couple's spectacular

John and Teresa's 50th Wedding Anniversary



John Vasko Greeting Guests



Cousin Steve Gardner (left) and Cynthia Clark, Hostess

success at matrimony.

One might say the Gardner Cousins' Reunion sort of flowed seamlessly right into this event. Let's get to that part of the story. Amazingly, all three living members of "The Original Gang of Ten" attended; i.e., Aunt Lois, Aunt Beulah, and Uncle Raymond.

Teresa and John have always had a special affinity for and a close bond with Uncle Raymond's children. In fact, of his six children, five of them were there: Steve, Gloria, Raylene, Sharon, and Ellen (all the way from Utah). Only Cheryl, who lives in California, didn't make it. Other Gardner cousins who attended were Paul Gardner (your editor), Rod Ames, Dawnita Ames, and Sheryl Griffes. (Please

forgive me if I've missed anyone.)

There are two more parts to the Vasko 50th celebration that make it even more memorable. The first

one is that some of Uncle Raymond's great grandchildren also attended.

Owen and Eva, the toddlers of Katrina and Kyle Jenkins, are enchanting children who mesmerized everyone with their funny antics and enthusiastic smiles. Robyn



Cousin Sheryl Hosford Aunt Lois, Aunt Beulah

and Frank Demand's daughters, Taylor and Jordan, were there too. One can only imagine what beautiful and entrancing ladies these two will grow up to be!

Hopefully, the *Gardner Newsletter* will be around to document it.

Another extra special treat was getting to visit with Uncle Raymond's grandchildren, Ciara (17) and Devlin (19), Ellen Gardner's and Jim McCarthy's children. Ciara spoke

John and Teresa's 50th Wedding Anniversary

of her being home-schooled and how she takes care of the many animals on their farm in Utah and runs the family store selling souvenirs to tourists. Devlin has turned into an avid traveler and recently returned from a trip to Majorca. His mother, Ellen, said he couldn't wait to continue on with his travels in order to attend John and Teresa's 50th. We hope to hear a lot more from these two in the future.

Finally, we come to the second part I mentioned earlier. It was the "frosting on the cake" to this grand event; namely, the ride back to Burlington, Vermont

that Cousin Rod's daughter, Jackie Patenaude, provided for your editor. Jackie drove through some of the most scenic vistas Vermont has to offer from Derby, VT to Burlington, VT, (Route 100 to Route 15) stopping along the way to purchase some cheese products and to have dinner at one of her favorite spots. What a perfect ending to a perfect celebration of two lives entwined together for 50 years. Like the "Energizer Bunny," the Gardner Cousins just keep going! And we know that Teresa and John will be doing just that.



Devlin McCarthy, Ellen Gardner, and Dawnita Ames



Brother and sister Ciara and Devlin McCarthy



Gloria Parsons with her grandson, Owen Jenkins



Ciara McCarthy with her Aunt Sharon Gardner

John and Teresa's 50th Wedding Anniversary



Paul Gardner and Jackie Patenaude having dinner together



Uncle Raymond and Cousin Rod Ames



Gardner Siblings: Steve, Sharon, and Ellen



John Vasko greeting more guests

