

Audrey's Stories

East Montpelier
Business Notices
Lumber
 Hollister M. V. B., Manufr and Dealer in Lumber, also Propr of Grist and Saw Mill, North Montpelier

Merchant
 Cate P. M., Genl Dealer in Boots, Shoes, Teas, Coffees, Sugars, Salt, Fish, &c., East Montpelier Village

Miscellaneous
 Bancroft A. A., Res, East Montpelier Village
 Clark S. C., Farmer, Dairyman and Stock Raiser, Dist No. 3
 Clark Theo., Farmer, Dairyman and Stock Raiser, Dist No. 3
 Cate A. M., Farmer, Dairyman, Wool Grower and Stock Raiser, Dist No. 4
 Coburn J. L., Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No. 4
 Foster H. D., Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No. 5
 Hammett L., Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No. 4
 Hollister A. J., Farmer, Dairyman and Breeder of Jersey Stock, Dist No. 4
 Kelton T. C., Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No. 5
 Lewis O. F., Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No. 3
 Martin H. H., Farmer, Dairyman, Stock Raiser and Wool Grower. Cotswold Sheep a specialty; Dist No. 4
 Mallory L. T., Railroadng, Res, Dist No. 3
 Tabor J. C., Farmer and Dairyman, Dist No. 2
 Willard C. C., Dealer in Horses. Also Propr of East Montpelier Fair Grounds and Trotting Course. East Montpelier Village
 Willard M. D., Farmer, Dairyman, Wool Grower and Horse Raiser, Dist No. 3



Audrey Daniels Lafirira - Born May 14 1931 - Died February 20 2022, aged 90 years

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Introduction

Back in the late winter of 2020 the Covid 19 epidemic was raging, changing all our lives, isolating us, scaring us, turning our worlds upside down. I had been helping out with research for the East Montpelier Historical Society and retreated into that work with relief. One day I got a call from Elliott Morse with some advice. "Why don't you give Audrey Lafirira a call. She might have some stories about the town." She was a native Vermonter in her late 80s.

I remembered Audrey from the lunch line at the Elementary School when our daughter Jesse was there, and from Morse Farm Maple where she had worked. Her snow white wavy hair was always just so. She wore glasses and had a sparkle to her, a little mischievous at times. She was slim, petit and energetic. Well, my first call to her showed how right Elliott was. That day was the start of a friendship that would last for years. It turns out Audrey had a lot to say. A whole lot. She may have been house bound, with her walker becoming more and more essential. Covid may have restricted her life even more, so she mainly saw her children who handled her care so well allowing her to stay in her tidy house on Carleton Boulevard safely. But. There was the phone.

She loved chatting, sometimes dropping her phone - sometimes hanging up abruptly when another call came in, mostly junk calls, so she would call back right away. I was honored that she added me to her extensive friend list, often phoning me 2 or 3 times a week. The police scanner was always crackling in the background. "Hello Jennifah, it's Audrey. I have a story to tell you before I forget!" took me out of the Covid nightmare and straight into Vermont's rich past. Audrey remembered so many things big and small.

I had been doing geneology research for years and made regular use of [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) and [newspapers.com](https://www.newspapers.com). I wanted to write all of her stories down and it made sense to add genealogical background and context where possible.

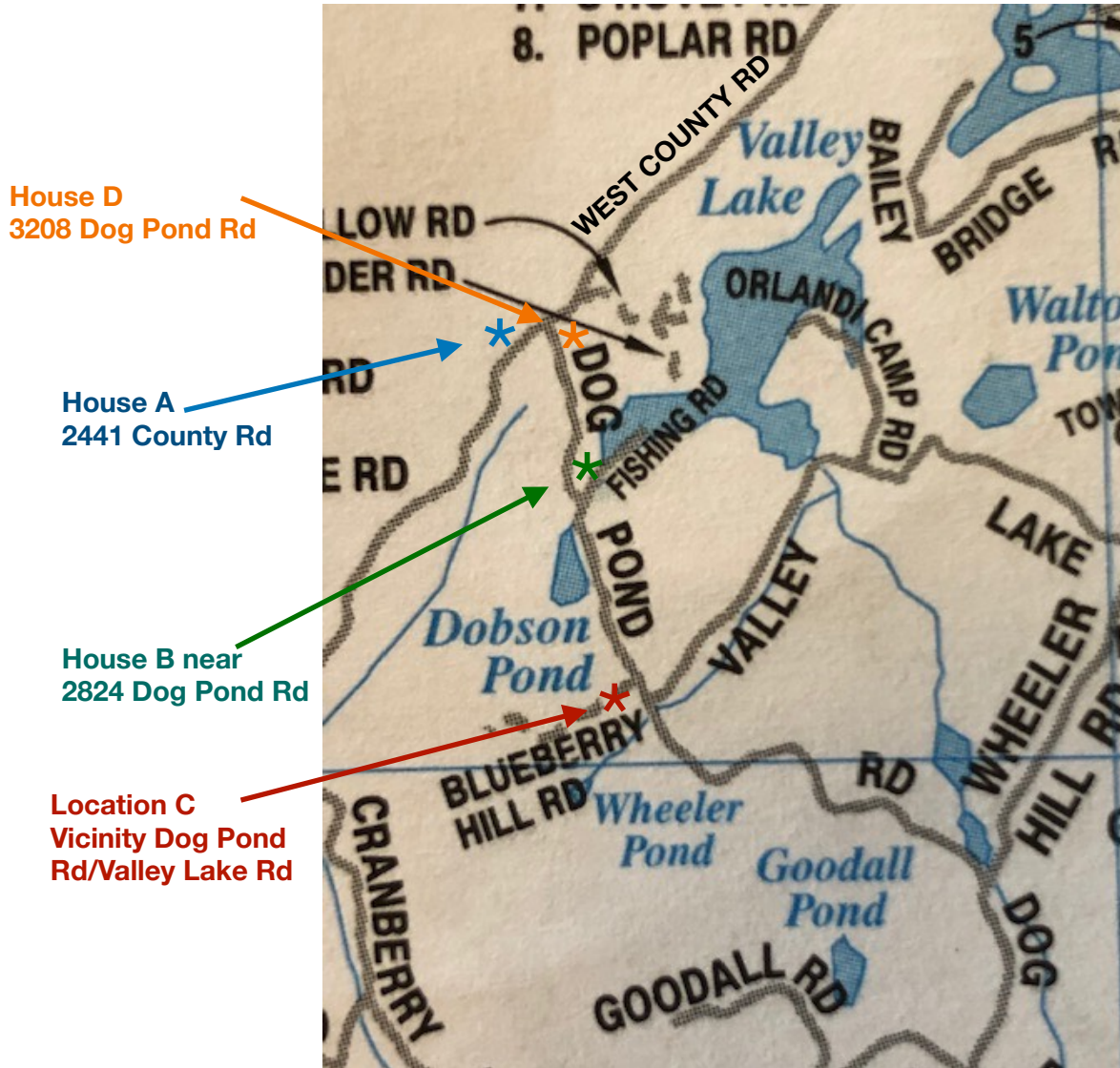
She had 2 different Gray families in her genealogical past, early settlers, both arriving in E. Montpelier in the late 1700s. These I list as the Kelso Grays who started out on Rte 14 near the Bragg Farm, and the Isaac Grays who settled on Factory St near N. Montpelier. On her mother's side her grandparents Herbert (Isaac Gray side) and Lucy Belle (Kelso Gray side) married and joined those two Gray families in a historical tangle. Her father's Daniels side from Woodbury was easier. Here is Audrey's collection of stories as told to me, along with some background history, pictures, and maps.

1. Audrey's Daniels Ancestors in Woodbury *****

Audrey's great great grandfather Samuel Daniels Jr from Lee, NH married Abigail Pinkham from the island of Nantucket in 1758. They first came to Danville, VT. Her great grandfather George Washington Daniels (1832-1905) lived in several houses in Woodbury (**House B** and **House A** below) near his brother Sam (1830-1898) (**House C**).

The current map below and the two historic 1800s maps in the next page are quite different, understandable given the guesswork involved in drawing the 1800s ones. But in my own guesswork I use the locations of streams, ponds, and houses as landmarks and ignore 1800s distances, which are sometimes inconsistent.

From Jimapco Vermont Road Atlas



The 1858 Wallings map on the right shows great grandfather George's farm (**House B**) on the north side of Dog Pond Rd just south of the Dog Pond stream. It was a log house according to an obituary. His brother Sam's farm (now gone) was just down the road near the intersection of Valley Lake Rd (**House C**). This might be the area of the current Blueberry Hill Rd (Town Highway 38).



House D - J.M. Dane

House A - L. Hathaway

House B - G.W. Daniels

House C - S Daniels

1873 Beers Map



The 1873 FW Beers map on the left shows that great grandfather George and family have moved to **House A**. They are west of the intersection of West County Rd and Dog Pond Rd. The small shingled farm house that still stands - 2441 West County Rd, shown on next page. Their old log house, **House B**, is gone, but might have been at the location of the house at 2428 Dog Pond Rd which was built in the 1870s or 1880s.

George Daniel's brother Sam is at **Location C** on both maps. In 1908 his son Sam Jr started Sam Daniels MFG, a foundry in Hardwick, specializing in wood and coal furnaces, that became very successful and operated for over a century. It was eventually moved to E. Montpelier and switched to metal fabrication until 2010 when it closed. That location is still in the family as Abby's Self Storage.

House A - G.W Daniels

House C - S Daniels

House D - J.M. Dana

House B - gone - rebuilt later - now 2824 Dog Pond Rd

1495 Bayne Commoli Rd

Great grandfather George Daniels married Samantha (or Cemantha- many misspellings in records) Jennings (1832-1885) of Calais. Her parents were Elijah S. and Jemima E. Jennings. On the 1858 map Elijah's farm shows at the location of 1495 Bayne Commoli Rd, Calais still standing.

Real estate information shows that it was built around 1825. This is near #10 Pond which in 1858 was Wheelock Pond according to the Wallings map.



2441 West County Rd - 1873 home of G.W. Daniels family



George and Samantha had ten children from 1859 to 1877 starting in the log cabin on Dog Pond Rd. Samantha's first child was born when she was 27 and the last when she was 45. How did they fit everyone into their second "bigger home", the tiny house above? *Audrey said "They must have hung 'em on hooks."*

I list George and Samantha's children below with birth date, death date, age at death, and cause of death. Audrey's grandfather Harry is in this list. I focus on the details because it represents the depth of difficulty in all their lives in those days. Most of these hard working people, Audrey's grandfather and her great aunts and uncles actually lived long lives.

Mark H. 1859 - 1913 (54) sawmill circular saw accident, torso wounds. He was helping a mill worker with a problem after delivering a yoke (pair) of oxen from Adamant to Williamstown.

Mary Celina 1861 -1947 (86) Diabetes Mellitis (Type 1 Diabetes)

Myra 1863 - 1878 (14) accidental ingestion of corrosive sublimate (modern name mercury chloride). It was used in antiseptics, laxatives, antidepressants, anti-syphilitics, wood preservatives.

John 1865-1885 (20) Measles

George 1867-1945 (77) Cerebral Hemorrhage

Harry (Audrey's grandfather) (77) 1869- 1946 Endomyocarditis

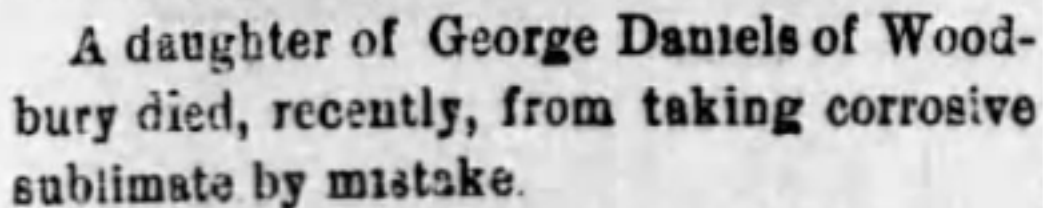
Flora 1870 - 1955 (85) Cerebral artery occlusion / Cardiovascular disease

Fred L. 1872 - 1951 (79) Cerebral Embolism

Lee 1874 - 1939 (65) Strangulated Hernia, La Grippe (Pneumonia)

Pert 1877 - 1936 (59) Fractured Skull

Newspaper notice in the papers about Myra Daniels death



A daughter of George Daniels of Woodbury died, recently, from taking corrosive sublimate by mistake.

2. Harry & Iva Daniels in East Montpelier *****

Audrey's grandfather Harry (1869 - 1946) married Iva Mable Burnham (1877 - 1958) from Woodbury around 1896 and they made East Montpelier their home, living on the current Rte 2.

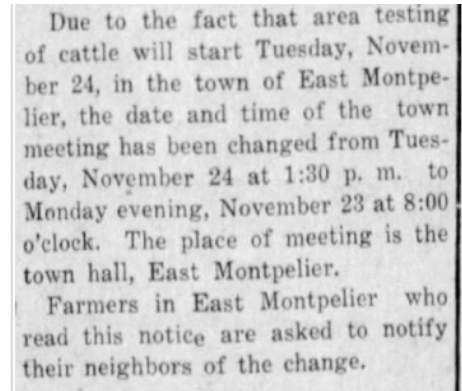
2614 US Rte 2 - burned in the 1950s



Harry and Iva's eight children were born between 1897 and 1920 - Harry Lynn, Ralph Burnham, Earl Clifton (Audrey's father), Hazel Luella, George Williams, Helen Madeline, Catherine Louise and Ray Francis. Earle Clifton, whose nickname was Tom, was born 11/24/1902.

Harry was involved in many things in E. Montpelier. He built a four square flat roofed house at the location of the present 2614 US Rte 2 for his family, first as a two story building, but the flat roof had leak problems so he added a third story with a hip roof and porch. It looks like Harry made sure he had a bigger house than where he grew up in Woodbury.

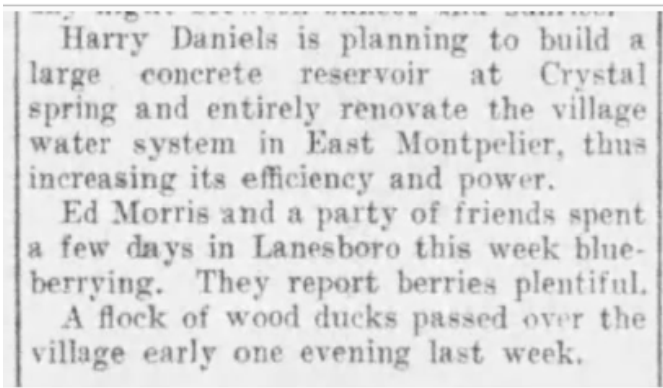
Evening Argus 11/21/1931



Harry was on the board of the Town Hall project and helped build the Town Hall in 1890 on the south side of US Rte 2 in front of the E. Montpelier Cemetery. It was demolished in the 1970s. *Audrey remembered baked bean suppers and that it had two wood stoves in the main hall. Also it had a problem in the era of cars: there was nowhere to park them.*

After the old Vene Morse house on Cherry Tree Hill Rd burned in 1911 he bought the property and built the replacement, the large gambrel house which still stands - it is the current All Together Now nursery school and camp at 170 Cherry Tree Hill Rd. Audrey jokes that he knew how to build barns so he liked building gambrel roofs best. He did not live there.

Snippet from EM Section of Barre Daily Times 8/11/1916



Harry also owned the old Green place on Minister Rd which is now a trail through the woods from Cherry Tree Hill Rd to Brazier Rd. Audrey remembered stories about the Green family, and that they walked in and out using a trail. In the early 1900s Harry developed the water springs on the Green place up the hill from the village, laying pipe to bring water to the village for the first community water system. He added reservoirs over the years. He added a water system for the houses south of the Winooski by directing water from the spring into a reservoir in the basement of his own house, but had problems with

damage to the pipes crossing the river to the southern part of town during ice jams. He added a second elevated pipe that could be used if the lower one was damaged. The water system is still in use and is still called Crystal Spring. Audrey said her aunt Helen Lane took care of the bookkeeping. Her father Earle helped out but didn't get a paycheck.

Harry was an energetic entrepreneur. He invested in many businesses - a bank and a creamery as well as serving in the Vermont House and Senate. He was mainly involved in several sawmills. He first milled lumber and had a retail and wholesale lumber business on his property in E. Montpelier since his land was near the dam.

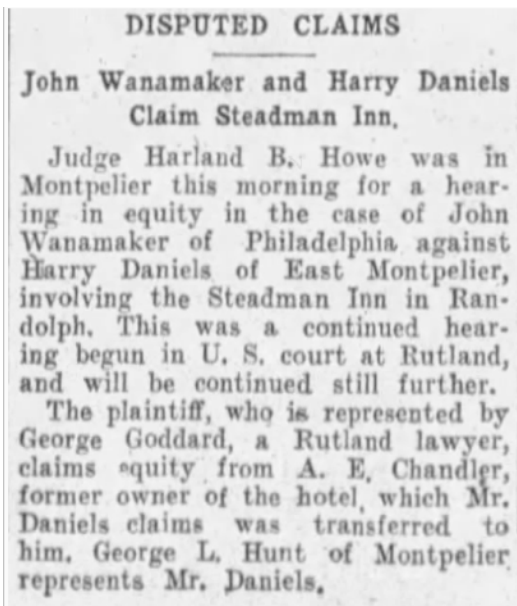
Part of article about May 16 1914 fire from Barre Times describing saving 7 traverse logging sleds

Among Mr. Daniels' losses are seven pairs of traverse sleds, which he says he would rather have saved than the automobiles; 3,500 feet of finished black cherry lumber; 70 doors, many window casements, and a good many hundreds of dollars' worth in shingles and clapboards. The traverse sleds had just been stored, after a winter's service in the lumber woods. The smaller storage shed and the automobile building had dimensions of 24x40 feet and 24x36 feet, respectively.

The article on right is part of a longer one describing how he lost most of his storage buildings in a large 1914 fire. Note mention of Traverse logging sleds, used in the 1800s and 1900s for winter logging. They were also used for recreation - "sliding" or sledding with up to eight people. The Lafirira chapter has more about those.

The last mill at that location burned in the 1920s. East Montpelier was plagued by fires all through its history.

Harry claims equity in Steadman Inn - 7/7/1934



Harry acquired the contents of the Steadman Inn in Randolph and kept some table cloths, silverware and chairs. Audrey still had some of these at the time of her passing. Once he got "a mess of pianos" and the family was given one. Another time he got a "mess of safes". Probably these collections were collateral for loans Harry gave out, or investments he was involved in.

He invested in and expanded the N. Montpelier Woolen Mill owned by the Littles in 1916 and supplied the lumber for renovations. He added a bobbin mill to the factory complex and built a covered pedestrian walkway that went over Rte 14 between two buildings near the bridge. In 1955 a truck hit it and it was taken down.

He then owned the sawmill north of Montpelier in Wrightsville before the flood control dam was built, and Audrey's father Earle later took it over. Audrey said one of the many products he milled were thick hemlock boards for use as flooring in barns where the livestock

were kept. More about the Wright Sawmill later.

Harry liked to drink a bit and used to go to a bar called the Roma Garden, at 207 Barre St, Montpelier - The building still stands. Audrey's father Earle never drank during his life and neither did Audrey. Harry smoked pipes and cigars and his clothes had burn holes, according to Audrey. The ashes made a mess too. Audrey was 15 years old when he died and clearly had an opinion.

The article on the right about a fire at the N. Montpelier Mill in 1930 is a glimpse of Harry's position and reputation in the community. Sadly Harry and Iva lost their daughter Hazel at age 25 the same year as the fire. *After his death his wife Iva stayed in the E. Montpelier house, collecting rent from the water company and Aunt Helen still used space to do the company books.*

Earle and Myrle, Audrey's Parents

Audrey's father Earle Daniels (1902 - 1979) married Merle Gray (1903 - 1964) on 11/16/1926. She was the daughter of Herbert and Lucy Belle Gray who lived at Grayholme in Calais, and whose marriage joined the two Gray families in the Gray chapters that follow. Audrey remembered that her mother had worked in the N. Montpelier Woolen Mill and had lost the tip of her little finger using the machinery. When Audrey was little they all lived on the third floor of Harry and Iva's house. Audrey had fond memories of the porch that looked out over the busy village.

Earle tried working in the N. Montpelier Woolen Mill but soon quit after a night shift and walked home to E. Montpelier. His father Harry offered him a job in the Wrightsville Mill. He bought a half interest in 1925 and the rest in 1929. Audrey Merle Daniels was born May 14, 1931. She was an only child.

Another family member had hoped to have a successful business. Uncle Lynn bought the Adamant Quarry and also a right of way to develop a railroad to it, but things didn't work out and he went bankrupt.

Article about Harry Daniels in the Waterbury Record from 1930

Sorry to learn of the fire loss at North Montpelier that came to Harry Daniels and his associates. When anything happens to Mr. Daniels, misfortune hits him, it strikes rather near home to his multitude of friends. It is friendly men, sympathetic men, helpful men, the type of Harry Daniels, that have friends when a loss occurs. In Mr. Daniels' case he can weather a financial loss caused by fire or business depression because when picking is good he works, takes advantage of every opportunity. It will take more than Mr. Daniels' share of a \$40,000 fire loss to make him look old or cause him to show signs of being a weakling. We like the kind of courage that is in Mr. Daniels' make up; he is the type of a man that makes a small town the size of North Montpelier become known, recognized as an industrial center, a place where men and women can find employment. There is no rural section in Vermont where people are any busier than in North Montpelier and this has been largely brought about through Harry Daniels' activities.

2574 US Rte 2



Earle had a new house built from Wrightsville lumber, the little gambrel (2574 VT Rte 2 - 1935) next to the old Buttrick Creamery, a wooden building now gone. Audrey was around six years old when they moved in. The house was set back from the road because Rte 2 had so many milk trucks coming and going to the Creamery and her parents worried about her safety.

Ironically the creamery was then moved to a new brick building that is the current E. Montpelier

2600 US Rte 2



Home Center at 2548 US Rte 2. Traffic was again uncomfortably close to the Daniels house. Her father then built a new larger house, this time a bungalow, still standing at 2600 US Rte 2, closer to his parents big house.

When Audrey started attending the E. Montpelier Village School, now the Town Offices, her mother walked her to and from school. It had two rooms, 1-4th grades and 5-8th grades. There was a two or three hole outhouse.

As a child she remembered contracting Chicken Pox and when the doctor visited the house he put up a quarantine sign on their front door.

Earle made Audrey things out of wood. He made her a pink cupboard that she put doll dishes in. He also

made her a wide pine board hope chest for her blankets and doilies.

One late summer day in the early 1940s her mother suggested they go up to Vene Morse's potato field on Drake Rd near the current Barre County Club. Vene paid folks to pick potatoes and they figured they could make some spending money. At the end of a long day they each got paid 35 cents. They didn't do THAT ever again!

Wayland Page went house to house Mondays and Thursdays taking orders for goods at Dudley's store. He would make deliveries in the afternoon and sometimes let Audrey ride in the back of his pickup on runs around town.

Audrey went to Montpelier High School, which was the current Middle School building on Main St and her father would give her rides on his way to and from the sawmill. It was hard to adjust to Montpelier High School in 9th grade. There was a sharp divide between the Montpelier students and the new ones from surrounding towns. The building had no kitchen so they would walk to the Union school for lunch.

Wrightsville

The current Wrightsville Flood Control Dam was finished in 1935, but there had been a dam and sawmill long before that built in 1834. The area around it became known as Wrightsville after Medad Wright took over the saw mill. The red clapboard mill building with a cupola that Harry Daniels and later Audrey's father Earle worked in (now gone) was built by Medad in 1865. An article in the 1967 Burlington Free Press includes an interview with Earle as he was about to sell the sawmill. He had worked there since 1924 and when he retired it was one of the last waterpower mills operating in the area. He remembers when up to 27 teams of horses a day would pull logs to the mill.

For years Earle been making box boards for the granite shed in Montpelier, probably Montpelier Granite Company. They were bad about paying him on time and owed him a lot of money. He finally decided to order a nice large gravestone.

**Earle Daniels at
Wrightsville Sawmill**



The \$500 came out of the debt they owed him.

Earle had built a box around the water wheel of the mill and filled it with sawdust and shavings to try and keep it from freezing in the winter. One year a beaver family set up housekeeping in that nice cozy box. Earle called Fish and Game but didn't want to kill the beavers. The sawmill had to shut down until they could trap the whole family. They kept a baby beaver in a bird cage, and the others in bigger cages before relocating them far away.

Audrey remembered the "government people" setting large blocks of granite on the new Wrightsville Dam. My guess is this was part of the work they had to do to make it higher when the first few floods still breached the top of the newly built dam.

Audrey liked swinging to and fro on the slab saw, when it wasn't running of course! Sometimes Earle needed to repair the dam when the water was low. She would accompany him when he walked up the sluiceway to put the boards in to block the water so he could get to the areas needing repair. She would take off her shoes and socks to give to her father and walk barefoot in the shallow water.

Audrey's aunt Catherine Daniels Lane was married to Dennis Lane, who worked at his family's long time business, Lane Manufacturing in Montpelier, and she did the books for the business. They made the saws and replacement teeth for the Wrightsville Mill. Earle built a house for the Lanes in E. Montpelier, the little white house that is the current 2764 US Rte just east of the Rte 14 bridge on the south side.

2764 US Rte 2 - Dennie & Catherine Lane's old house



In 1964 Audrey's mother Merle died of hardening of the arteries and complications of Rheumatoid Arthritis at age 62. Her father married Clopha Page (1921 - 1980) in 1965. In fact Clopha was a part of the East Montpelier community and a close friend of the family. Audrey got along very well with her step mother.

Clopha worked as a housekeeper for Lewis Sibley at the current 2537 US Rte 2, the house across from the E. Montpelier Home Center. She then worked for the Milnes, friends of the family at the current 225 Butterfield Rd in N. Montpelier. Later she was head cook at the E. Montpelier school. She had never gone to high school, but could sew anything, was a great painter, and could feed as many people as needed. Audrey had several of her paintings, including one of yellow and pink Lady Slippers.

The newspapers are full of Clopha and Audrey's names, helping with community organizations and several churches, cooking, and volunteering. They seemed always ready to bake, organize a community meal or serve their neighbors. Once Clopha Page became Clopha Daniels the papers continued list her volunteering labors. She succumbed to Chronic Leukemia in 1980.

An article in the paper about a June 1954 Strawberry Festival lists (among others) Mrs Earl Daniels - Audrey's mother Myrle, Miss Clopha Page who would marry Audrey's father after Myrle passed, and Mrs George Lafirira - Audrey, who had been married for three years. Another person of note is Mrs George Lane - Minnie Lane who was the long time Town Clerk in E. Montpelier.

Barre Daily Times 7/29/1947

Miss Clopha Page and Miss Audrey Daniels left Saturday for Saco, Me., where they will attend the religious education institute at Ferry Beach.

3. The Isaac Grays*****

Lineage: Isaac, Dennis, Clark, Herbert & Myrle, Audrey

Several early E. Montpelier settlers came from Rochester MA, northeast of New Bedford, including Caleb Bennett and Clark Stevens, who started a community of Quakers in E. Montpelier. John and Mary Gray also came north in 1794 from that area and their son Isaac Gray (1777 - 1874) married Betsey, sister of Clark Stevens. They were Audrey's great great great grandparents. Here's a wonderful article below.

Article about Isaac Gray 7/10/1873:

EAST MONTPELIER WHITTLINGS.—

The "oldest inhabitant" in town is Isaac Gray, who resides with his son, Denis Gray, about half a mile from the North village. He completes his ninety-sixth year this month. He was born near New Bedford, Mass., and came to this town about the year 1795. His first work was assisting Maj. N. Davis in getting out timber for his house and other buildings. Subsequently he married Miss Betsey Stevens, sister of the late Clark Stevens, and settled on a farm in the south-eastern part of the town. Soon after he purchased a farm bordering on Calais line, which he owned and occupied sixty-nine years, or until incapacitated by old age. His family was increased by thirteen children, seven sons and six daughters, eight of whom arrived to a mature age. His wife died seven years ago, having been a faithful companion for sixty-six years. Mr. Gray has ever been a good citizen, a man not easily influenced, and took great pride in adhering to his individual ideas. He recognized no superiors, and to illustrate: One of his boys once had a fight and soundly whipped his antagonist, when "uncle Isaac," as he is called, proudly exclaimed "chip of the old block." Democracy has ever been the guiding star of the Gray family, though "uncle Isaac" went over to the republicans some years since, while his brother, the late William Gray, was a sound Democrat to the last, and so will "Uncle Bill's" children ever be. Although Mr. Gray is quite infirm yet his bodily health is good, and he may live to celebrate his one hundredth birthday.

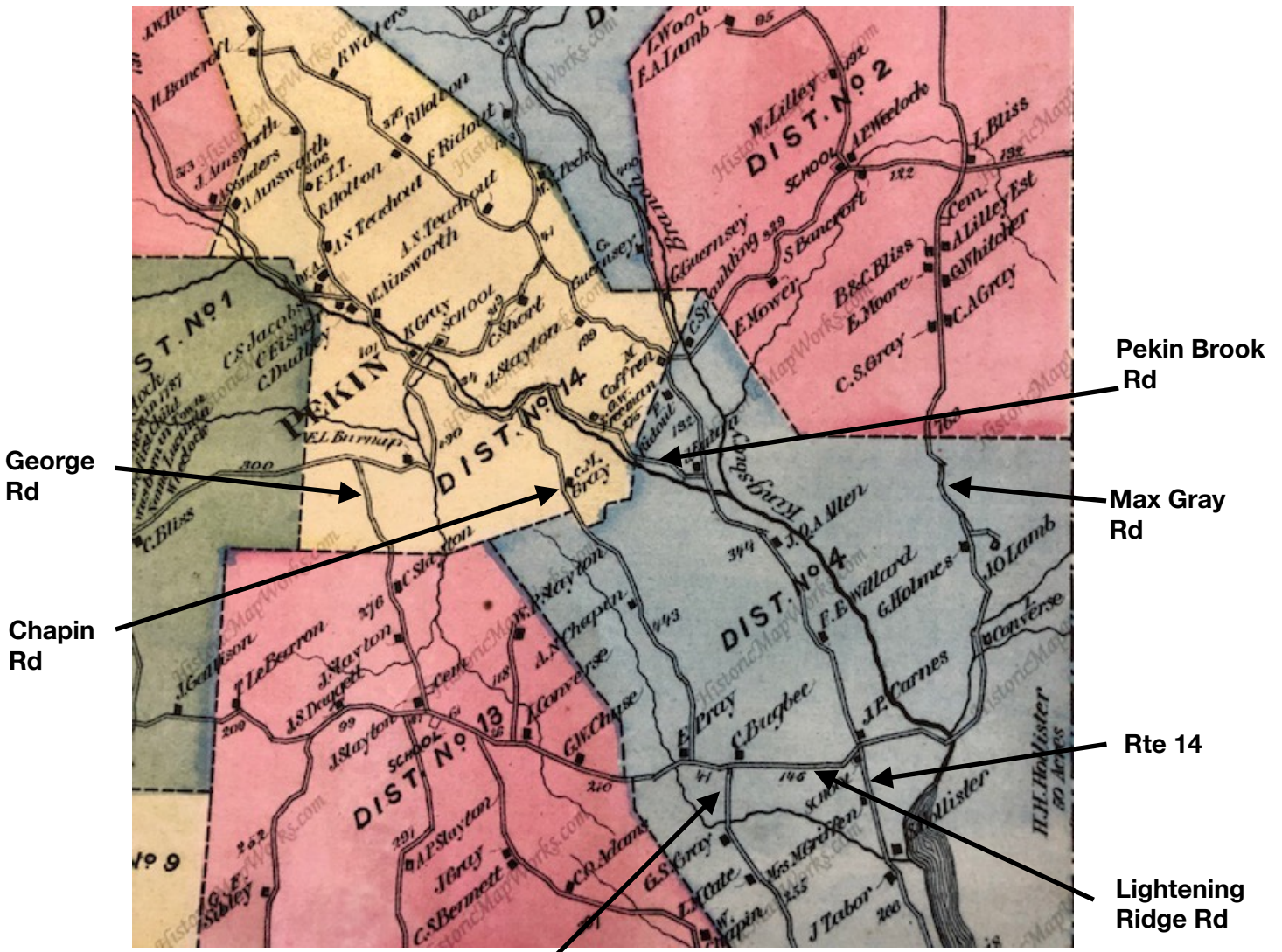
Isaac's sons Dennis (1805 -1879) - (Audrey's great great grandfather) and Isaac Jr farmed along Factory Street near N. Montpelier. The Wallings 1858 map below shows "I Gray"(Isaac Jr) on the north side of the current Factory St (in the red shading) just east of a brook and the Tucker Rd intersection. "D Gray" (Dennis) shows just west of the intersection of Factory St and Gray Rd on the north side. The farm buildings are gone as far as I can tell.



Clark Monroe Gray

Dennis's wife was Phila Burnham. Their son Clark Monroe Gray (1839 - 1916), Audrey's great grandfather, is an interesting man. He married Kate Reliance Bugbee of the Lightning Ridge Rd Bugbees in 1860 and they settled on what would later be Chapin Rd in Calais that used to go from Pekin Brook Rd up to Lightning Ridge Rd. A.N Chapin shows in the map below with C.M. Gray to the north. A small section of Chapin Rd remains at the Lightning Ridge Rd end. With the help of Erika Mitchell who lives on George Rd I found the cellar hole that is probably Clark and Kate's. There is a huge old apple tree across the road that is 10.5' in diameter. A giant maple near the home site is 13' in diameter. Clark and Kate had 2 children, Herbert (1862-1948), Audrey's grandfather, and Flora (1867 - 1908). Sadly Kate died of Puerperal Peritonitis, related to child bed fever, on August 3, 1872. She is buried in the Poplar Cemetery off Rte 14 north of N. Montpelier.

1873 Beers Map - Calais



Gray Rd - C Bugbee location is still farmed

In June of 1873 a tragedy hit Calais. 24 people went on an outing on Wheelock Pond, the current #10 Pond. They set out in several row boats, crossing the pond to the far side to have a picnic together. One of the boats was a home built affair made of two boats strapped together, and when everyone started back to the shore it became unbalanced and tipped over. Five people died and the community was deeply saddened. Clark Gray, widowed the year before, was on this outing with his two children Herbert (Audrey's Grandfather), and Flora. The papers describe the scene:

“Mr. Clark Gray succeeded in saving himself and his two children; he had hold of his little girl three years old when they went into the water, but on seeing his boy go under the boat, left his girl and dove under for the boy; got him out and placed him on the boat and said, "hang on or you'll drown !" and dove for the little girl, who was sinking for the last time. Life had apparently gone when she was found, but was restored about half an hour later.”

Thankfully they recovered and Clark married Irene Rideout that November. They had a daughter, Phila. Clark was involved in several other accidents. In 1879 he helped neighbors when he was summoned to help save young Henry Gray, son of Otis Gray of the “Kelso” Grays (Hugh, Kelso, Otis, Lucy Belle, Merle, Audrey), the subjects of the next chapter. Workers had dug into a sand bank on the Pekin Brook near the school to get sand for plastering the Old West Church. When the children were let out of school several boys played in the sand, but the bank collapsed onto poor Henry, killing him. In the 1880s Clark pulled Martin Hollister, the owner of the N. Montpelier Mill from the water during a flood that was threatening the dam. Apparently Martin later assured everyone he hadn't been in danger, not one bit. Clark's connection to the Kelso Grays is detailed below.

4. The KALSO Grays *****

Lineage - Kalso, Hugh, Kelso, Otis, Lucy Belle, Merle (m. Herbert), Audrey

The Gray family on Audrey's grandmother Lucy Belle's side was among E. Montpelier's early settlers. Kalso Gray and his wife Phebe moved from Worcester, MA to Peterborough, NH around 1775. Their son Hugh moved to E Montpelier. Hugh's son Kelso (1804 - 1882), Audrey's great great grandfather, first lived in the area of Rte 14 north of the current Bragg Farm, further up the hill on the same side. His descendant Ann Gray, Audrey's cousin, once went with Dave Coburn, also a relative, and long time supporter of the E Montpelier Historical Society to see an old barn foundation there, up on the hill. He had traced the deed to Kelso.

Kelso married Laura Ann McKnight (1817 - 1849), 13 years his junior, in 1835 and they had Lucy Ann in 1842, Abby in 1845, Otis in 1847 and Mary in 1849. Laura died two weeks after Mary's birth, probably of childbed fever, very common at that time. Little Mary died in April of 1850 and they are both buried in the Cate Farm Cemetery.

Grayholme - 8 George Rd

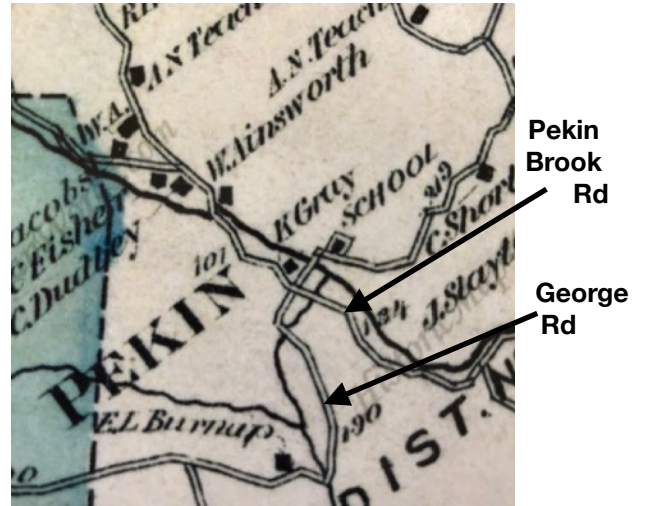


Kelso soon married Adaline Loomis, 21 years his junior on January 1, 1851 and by 1870 they had moved from E. Montpelier to the gray farmhouse that still stands at 8 George Rd the corner of Pekin Brook Rd in Calais. The family calls it Grayholme. “Vermont Place Names” notes that the name Pekin derived from a wheat field in the area planted by an area farmer whose family had done missionary work in China.

By now they had four more children - Laura Ann, named after Kelso's lost wife, Frank, Freeman H, and Jennie, born when Kelso was 59, 21 years after his first child. Kelso's son Otis and his wife Emma Holt, Audrey's great grandparents, lived in Pekin during the sad time when their son Henry Kelso Gray died under a sand bank collapse on the Pekin Brook in 1879. They had six daughters including, Lucy Belle, Audrey's grandmother.

The house, Grayholme, is interesting. The 1873 map on right shows K Gray sandwiched between Pekin Brook Rd and the brook itself at the intersection. In 1875 Kelso moved the house across the road, away from the erosion dangers of the brook, and built an addition. He was 71 years old.

1873 Beers Map



Real Estate Clues about the swap between Kelso Gray and Clark Gray:

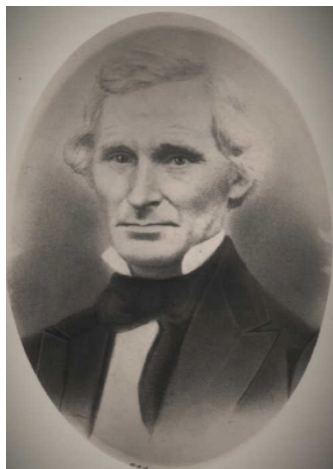
It's rare for newspapers to have a lot of news snippets about someone, but there are plenty about Kelso and Clark M Gray of the 2 different Gray families so I include them on the next page - there is no marriage connection yet.

1876 - Clark M Gray (of the Isaac Grays) left his Chapin Rd farm to buy the E Calais tub factory and hotel from A.C. Slayton. The hotel is possibly 4536 Rte 14 next to the current store (but I'm not sure) which still stands and is listed in the East Calais Register of Historic Places, connecting it to A.C. Slayton.

1879 - At age 75 Kelso Gray traded Grayholme for Clark Gray's E Calais hotel and tub factory. By September Kelso wanted to make cider at his "red shop" which was near his new tub factory.

1881 M.E. Laird, the new owner of the sawmill and uppermost dam of the three in E. Calais village rebuilt and raised it, but it broke and the flooding damaged all the others down stream, including Kelso's. Kelso commenced rebuilding his dam, which was west of Rte 14 off Moscow Woods Rd on the old Grist Mill Rd. He was now 77 years old.

Kelso Gray (1804-1882)



Kelso Gray died 5/15/1882, having kept up an active life until the end.

The 1873 Map of East Calais is on page 17.

Dam Failure - 11/16/1881 from Green Mountain Freeman

both to the town and individuals. Mr. Laird, the proprietor and builder of the saw mill, is a young man of energy, and had built up what appeared to be a good lumber trade in manufacturing hard wood into chair stock. In the repair of the dam he took the risk of building peculiar to his own liking, which proved too weak for the power behind it. This and similar

EAST CALAIS.—Mr. A. C. Slayton, who has run the hotel in this place the last two years, vacates the same to-day, May 20. Mr. Clark M. Gray will occupy the hotel on and after this date. Mr. Slayton has taken rooms in the house owned by Mrs. Blanchard in this place. The above shifts are in accordance with a change of real estate between Mr. Slayton and Mr. Gray. Mr. Slayton exchanging his hotel and Butter Tub Factory for Gray's farm.

9/24/1879

EAST CALAIS.—Kelso Gray is going to make cider in his red shop this fall. The foxes are making bad work with the poultry in this vicinity.

Kelso Gray's tub factory 12/14/1881

EAST CALAIS.—A dam is being put in at the saw-mill to take the place of the one washed out four weeks since. The work is aided largely by contributions from farmers and others in the vicinity. Otis Slayton's shop that was so badly damaged by the washout is being repaired by having a new basement. Kelso Gray is procuring the material for the rebuilding of the dam at his tub factory. . . . The ladies' aid society met at the house of A. Dwinell last week Wednesday. There were fifty present. The evening's entertainment consisted of singing, chatting and a play called "Aunt Mehitable's Scientific Experiment."

Kelso Gray got a severe cut on his right hand, from a scythe, last week, quite disabling him for the present, although it is now doing well.

1/22/1879

C. M. Gray has exchanged his hotel and butter tub manufactory for the Kelso Gray farm, located in what is called Pekin.

1/22/1879

Kelso Gray, of East Calais, has sold his farm, and will offer his farming tools, stock, vehicles, and other property, at auction next week Wednesday, commencing at 10 o'clock A. M.

4/19/1882

EAST CALAIS.—Bell George has bought a new upright piano.

Kelso Gray's age is telling upon him. The doctor says he is on the wrong side of seventy to have medicine take a good effect.

W. S. Pierce has sold 6000 tin sugar cans and pails, 2300 sap tubs, 500 large pails and \$350 worth of sap pans this season.

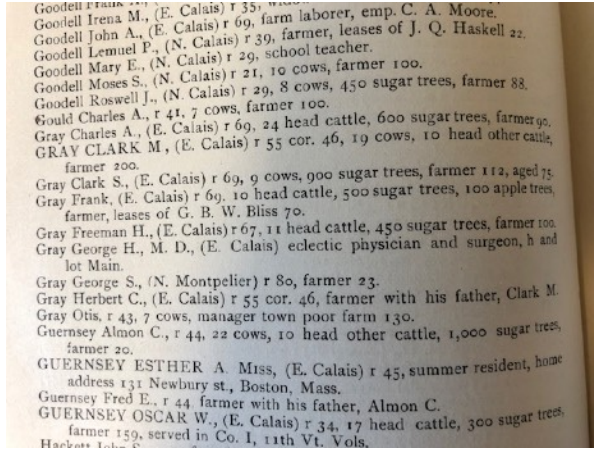
5/18/1882

The funeral of Kelso Gray was at the church last Sunday, Elder Forbes officiating. Mr. Gray was 77 years old and had many friends.

Audrey's Grayholme memories & stories about the Grays

Audrey remembers Uncle Clark saying that her great grandfather Kelso's name is carved into a beam in the Grayholme hay barn somewhere, but the family hasn't seen it for themselves.

1884 Child's Directory - Grays



One of my favorite Audrey stories is about the Slayton family and it shows a lot about Grandmother Lucy Belle's character. She used to see little Hiram Slayton walking from his family's house past Grayholme on his way to the Pekin school. There was only the boy and his mother. During her daily chores Gramma Lucy noticed that Hiram would leave his lunch pail, which was almost empty, hidden in the barn, and pick it up after school on his way home. It turns out that the kids at school were making fun of how paltry his lunch was. She started making him a lunch for his pail every day. She also gave him work to do on the farm. He grew up and moved out of state to work for a telephone company, but would come back to Vermont every summer to visit his mother and the Grays. He took his mother back to

Massachusetts in her old age, and when she died he arranged for her burial in the Robinson Cemetery in Calais on the 2nd to last road, down near the fence. Audrey said the Slayton family always sent Christmas cards expressing thanks for caring so much about little Hiram.

Edna and Skip Armstrong owned Grayholme after Audrey's family passed it on. Skip ran the schedules for the school bus company. They had cows and Edna took care of the milking chores. The seven room house was a plank construction of solid wood with walls made of planks laid flat on top of each other. They decided they needed to insulate the walls of the downstairs rooms but couldn't insulate from the outside because of the solid piles of planks. They did it from the inside and Edna did most of the work herself between her milking chores, ripping out lath and plaster, putting in studs and insulation, then putting up wall board and wall paper.

I've heard that some stones from the old foundation when the house was on the other side of the road still show, but I couldn't find them. Ann Gray remembers them, but thinks they were bulldozed

Audrey's great grandmother Phila Burnham Gray's brother Ivon Burnham was shot and killed at a party in a brick house on Peck Hill Rd at the top in the right. The dispute involved checkers, home brew and a borrowed stuffed owl. Cy Lapan went to jail for the murder, but rumor had it he didn't do it. There was another brick house up there but it burned. Audrey once said this might be on Jack Hill Rd but I've talked to Scott Bassage who lives on Fifer's Run that used to go through between Peck Hill and Jack Hill. He says the Bassage brick house is the site of the murder and the road used to be Burnham Rd (in Calais, not the one in N. Montpelier). Also there was a 2nd brick house nearby that burned down. So Audrey's memory of this story was spot on. The road is mostly class 4 now, with the west end near Jack Hill thrown up in the 1960s.

Grayholme used to have a big porch. Audrey would play on the porch swing, and since her aunt Ida Persons lived in Laconia NH, she would pretend to be taking the train to Laconia. That train line started operations in 1867. Audrey and her mother really did take the train from the Fair Mont Station just south of E. Montpelier on Rte 14 next to the Checkerboard feed store. There was a freight train going to Woodsville that had a 1/2 train car for passengers. They would ride south to Woodsville on the rail line that went through Plainfield Village, Marshfield and what is now Groton Forest, passing Lanesboro station, put in by Lane Manufacturing. At Woodsville they would switch trains to go to Laconia to visit their relatives.

Gramma Lucy liked to play tricks on Audrey's Uncle Clark (Clark M. Gray's name sake), who was still living with his parents at Grayholme. Audrey remembers how Gramma (imagine a dress or skirt) would invite her on a prank: in the early morning they would go upstairs and climb out a window onto the porch roof. They would sneak down to Clark's bedroom window and rap on it, waking him up quite completely! Gramma Lucy would let Audrey use her big chicken pot pie tin for sliding on the snowy hillside pasture behind the Pekin School. Audrey remembers Uncle Clark moving two heifers out of that pasture, each tied to the end of the same rope, and getting very tangled. He was not pleased.

When Gramma rendered lard from a pig, she would heat up the chunks and then pour the hot liquid into a special metal can with a lid to cool. They would buy nice light maple syrup from the neighbors, the Lilleys, probably the current 208 Jack Hill Rd, bringing a wooden tub to the sugar house to fill while the very thick syrup was hot. As it cooled it crystalized into hard maple sugar in the tub. At home when they wanted some syrup they would chip out a few chunks of the maple sugar and put them in a pan with water. Once heated it became the consistency of pourable syrup. Sometimes the mice got their share of the maple sugar in the pantry.

Audrey and her parents family would go to Gramma Lucy's for Sunday dinner, which was usually fried salt pork and milk gravy. Her grandparents made sure to never do haying on Sundays, since they couldn't miss Sunday dinner.

Gramma would make bed sheets out of cotton grain (or flour) bags. She would cut the bags open so they were flat, bleach them and lay them out in the sun on the lawn, then scrub them on a scrub board until the printing disappeared. Then she would sew four together to make each sheet. There was a feather bed on Gramma's bed and Audrey would sleep with her when they visited.

Once Audrey and her parents spent the night up at Grayholme. There was a wood burning kitchen stove salesman who stayed overnight there on a regular basis. He drove his car on a local route and liked clean places to sleep without bedbugs. The phone rang and he answered it, then yelled "Tell Tom Daniels his house is on fire!" Tom was her father Earle's nick name. The burning house was the small one, the first that Earle had built for the family in E. Montpelier, and they were building the second bigger one at the time. The damage was limited to the attic. The houses are described in the Daniels chapter.

Uncle Clark said #10 pond had no bottom and was 150 ft deep. He said it was named #10 because 10 people had drowned in it and bodies were never found. The truth is it's 110 feet deep and was named #10 because it was in the #10 school district. But what a lively story!

Uncle Clark had a little terrier that would get into porcupines on a regular basis. Clark had a hard time pulling the quills out of this feisty little dog until he realized he could hold the dog on the ground and set a two tine pitchfork down so the tines sank into the ground on either side of the dogs neck. Clark could pull the quills out with ease. Clark would go on to inherit Grayholme.

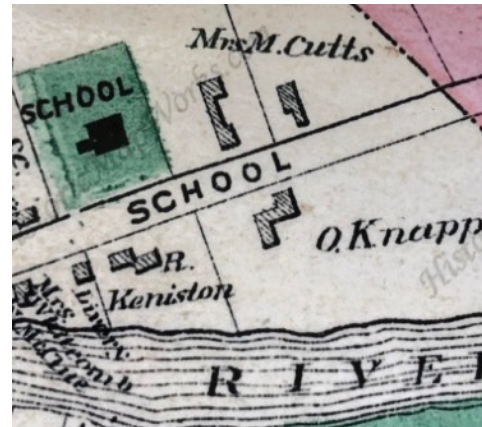
5. Audrey's inlaws the Lafiriras & Memories of N. Montpelier*****

Audrey's in laws were *George Patrick Lafirierre (Lafirira) 2/6/1894 - 6/6/1984 and Luvia Irene Page (4/11/1902 - 4/8/1977) . They are buried in the Plainmont Cemetery.*

Audrey's father in law George grew up in Mansonville Quebec, west of Lake Memphramagog. He grew up speaking French but could not read or write since his family lived too far from the school for him to attend. He came to the United States with his family on May 9 1901 at age seven, not speaking a word of English.

He enlisted in the US military for World War I at Fort Ethan Allen to get his US citizenship, serving from 6/28/1917 to 4/29/1919. The spelling of his name was changed at that time from Lafirierre to Lafirira. He was sent to France as a teamster, driving supplies by horse and wagon to the front lines, and caring for the horses. Audrey remembered him talking about a battle in France but wasn't sure of the name - "Agonne?" "Benum?" "Vedomme?" It could have been the battle of the Argonne, one of the final battles on the Western Front that ended with the Armistice November 11, 1918. This was the time when the Spanish Flu was spreading among soldiers all over Europe. He got his citizenship, and he loved horses for the rest of his life. An article written by Paul Heller about the Lafiriras in 2016 says that George had had his front teeth knocked out by a mule team during the war and had gold teeth after that. Audrey couldn't remember his teeth. After the war the 1920 Census shows him as a naturalized citizen, boarding with the Fay family in Irasburg, Vermont. His occupation is listed as laborer, his type of industry is listed as "at anything".

1873 Beers Map of School St. O Knapp may be 142 School St



Luvia Page, his future wife, was the daughter of Mary McKnight and Edwin W. Page, who was from five generations of Plainfield residents. Her father was a blacksmith, as was her grandfather Walter B., and great grandfather Mark M. Page. Luvia's mother Mary was born in Marshfield and moved to Plainfield in 1900 at age 18. The 1900 census done in June lists her as a boarder in the house of Edwin Page, who was 35, along with his mother Irene. Mary and Edwin were married in October 1900 and Luvia was born in 1902. They lived on "School St" (the current US Rte 2) according to the 1910-1920 census records, across from the old school at 123 School St, a little east. I think the house is 142 School St, O. Knapp (1873 Beers map).

Plainfield flood 10/7/1869 takes shop of Mark M Page

Between this village and Marshfield only two bridges over the Winooski are left. In Plainfield the loss was very great; almost every bridge between the village and Perkinsville was swept away, and the road so gullied as to be more like the bed of a mountain torrent than a highway. At the village the saw mill of Willis Lane, the brick grist mill, the two buildings just below, and the shops of Mark M. Page were carried off in quick succession, and in a short time were followed by the barn and part of the house of R. Taylor. The loss in the village alone is more than \$20,000, and in other parts of the town at least \$10,000 more.

Page home at 142 School St



There was a 17 year gap in their ages, and Edwin died early in Mary's long life. She became a maid to the Parks family on Main Street and died at 91, 50 years after her husband's passing. In the 1920 census their daughter Luvia Irene Page was listed in Fairfield, Vermont staying with her aunt and uncle George and Laura Wells while she attended the academy in St Albans. Luvia and George must have met in that area and they married in 1921. He had learned English, but reading and writing were left to Luvia once they married. He never could write more than his name. Luvia would read him the newspaper and other items of interest every day.

George and Luvia Lafirira's First Farm

The next 2 pages have old and new maps of the area of George and Luvia's first farm in E. Montpelier. I have details here about where the current Rte 214 was first built sometime between when the 1858 and 1873 maps were printed, and then how it was moved when in the 1950s when erosion became a big problem. Their first farm with 10 or 12 cows was at the current 1795 Rte 214, where the house still stands on the west side of the road. The road was built in 1872 and shows on the 1873 Beers Map, but the location of the Lafirira Farm with the name J.E. Hollister is on the EAST side of the road because the road was later moved to the other side of the farm buildings. Audrey remembered when the road was rebuilt in 1951. I think there was a bend in the road towards the river, but they straightened it to get it further from the eroding river bank and that put the Lafirira farm on the river side. The original house still stands and the porch has been moved to face the "new" road. There have been renovations and the current land owner has ongoing erosion issues with the clay soil even now.

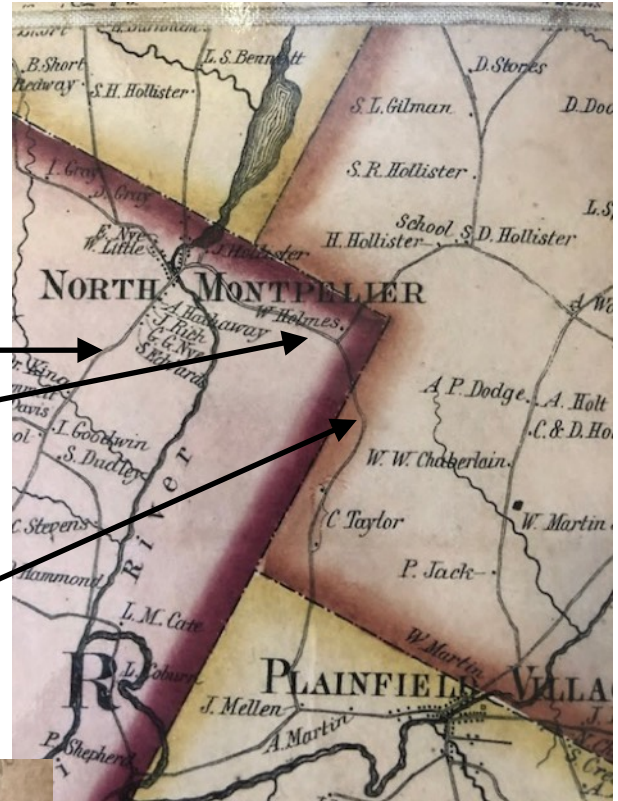
George and Luvia's house had no plumbing other than a sink in the kitchen. There was only a two hole outhouse attached to the house next to the dining room. It had two buckets that needed to be emptied every day outside. The spring that supplied the house with water was not reliable and the farm lost water sometimes. Bathing involved heating pans of water on the wood cook stove. Luvia and George would have sponge baths in the kitchen. The children would have baths upstairs in their rooms.

George Sr and Luvia's children were Irene 1925, George 1927(Audrey's future husband), Frank 1929, Gloria Ruby 1931 (married David Winters 1951), Roger 1933. The N. Montpelier School had recently been closed so they went to school with Audrey at the E. Montpelier Village school and she and Gloria were close friends. Sometimes when Audrey's parents were headed to Pekin to have Sunday dinner with her grandparents they would drop Audrey off at the Lafirira's to play with Gloria. They were born the same year and married the same year. Eventually they both became widows and always kept in touch until Audrey's death in 2022.

Irene Mary, the oldest married Marcelle W Camire of Barre. His family sold Audrey and George the farm in the 1950s. George enlisted in World War II right out of high school around 1944. He was blind in one eye but was able to get a job in the mail room, staying in the US. He later married Audrey. Frank (1929-1958) had a heart condition. He temporarily lost his vision as a symptom. At 19 he had major heart surgery involving hundreds of stitches. His father paid the \$1000 bill by selling off his entire dairy herd. He paid the bill in full, not believing in debt. He eventually bought new cows to get the farm going again. Frank lived another ten years, passing away at 29. He is buried in the Plainmont Cemetery. A sweet little tidbit: Luvia made 2 cakes a day for her hungry farmers. She tried to hide away one piece for Frank to have in his lunch pail the next day but he always found it before she could pack it! Roger married Betty Jean Beede and they raised a family in Barre. He was a farmer and later a milkman.

1858 Wallings Map:

Here on pages 22 & 23 are maps that show the details of the story of Burnham Rd(N Montpelier) that follows on page 24. They also shows details of the rerouting of Rte 214.

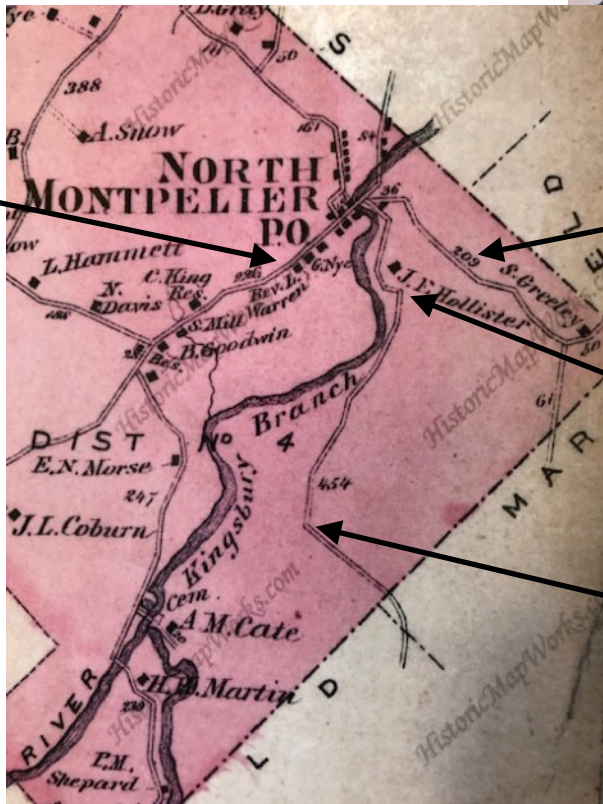


Rte 14

"Burnham Road", now trail to Taylor Farm Rd. Audrey's relatives the Burnhams lived where it says "W Holmes".

Taylor Farm Rd

1873 Beers Map:



Rte 14

"Burnham Rd, now trail - Burnhams were at "S Greeley"

Site of Lafirira Farm

Current Rte 214 built in 1872, one year before Beers Map was published.



"Burnham Road", now trail to Taylor Farm Rd. Audrey's relatives the Burnhams at the intersection

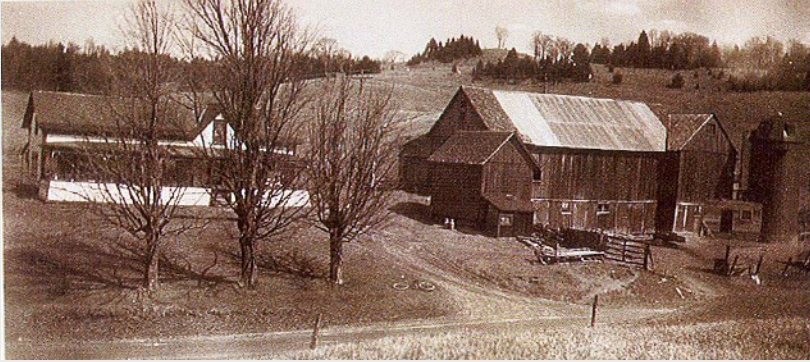
Hollister Farm, then Lafirira - current 1795 Rte 214

Old route of current Rte 214 road before 1950s re-route

Taylor Farm Rd

Old Taylor Farm Rd, before Rte 214 was built in 1872. Current Greenwood Dr follows the old road.

Burnham Rd, now a trail, shows on the 2 maps on pages 22-23. Before the current Rte 214 was built in the 1860s people going from N. Montpelier to



1942 view of Lafirira farm when road was downhill of it.

1942 view - other end of driveway



1963 view of back of house from NEW road location above house. The porch is still on the other side of the house, facing the old road location. It will eventually be moved to this side.

Photos from Theresa Doyle & Chris Reed, current owners.

Plainfield could follow Burnham Rd north from the current Butterfield Rd, go left on Taylor Farm Rd then right on Hollister Hill Rd to Rte 2 east of the village. Her relatives, the Harold Burnhams, lived at the corner of Burnham Rd and Taylor Farm Rd, where there is now a sugar house. A two story henhouse burned in 1945 and the house burned in 1958. The barn still stands. Harold was a cattle dealer and farmer. Harold's wife Pearl was lame in one leg, but did the milking chores since Harold was on the road. The day that Frank had heart surgery, Pearl limped the mile down Burnham Rd to the farm to offer help with the milking at the Lafirira's. George Sr had taken care of it, but gave Pearl a ride back to her farm.

The Psychic

Luvia was a well known psychic. In 1921 right after she married George she started putting short classifieds in the local papers. She had a lot of customers for her psychic readings and her system was first come first served. She and her family always had a big Sunday dinner. One couple would always come for a reading right before the Sunday dinner hour and Luvia would end up asking them to stay to eat. Finally she got a little sick of these free loaders. The next Sunday while they were visiting in the kitchen after the meal she took the plates off the table and put them on the kitchen floor so their German Shepherds could lick them clean. Then she took them off the floor and put them straight into the cupboards. Audrey and Irene were helping do the dishes and stood with their backs to the couple since they could barely keep from laughing out loud. That couple never scheduled another reading right before Sunday dinner! Audrey thought that Luvia would secretly wish for a customer to knock on the door right after meals so she didn't have to do the dishes.

Audrey told me a typical reading of Luvia's: A farmer had bred one of his Jersey cows to a Jersey bull and could not find her out in the field when she was due to produce a calf any day. He asked Luvia where the two might be. She told him a location and said they better be looking for a red and white calf. The farmer was surprised since he had not bred her to a Guernsey which is red and white, but sure enough when he found the cow and new calf, red and white it was. Luvia never charged for her readings about lost animals. She sometimes had to suppress a chuckle. Someone came for a reading, asking where the mouse hole was in her house. And still another came back after a reading about a lost item and said "You know, I found it! It was in the last place I looked!"

If a customer lingered after a reading, Luvia would take the cash payment, anywhere from \$2.00 to \$5.00 and tuck it into one of the books in her bookcase as the next customer knocked at the door. After she died the family realized they had a job to do. They started checking the books in her bookcase and discovered dollar bills tucked into dozens of books. They had to shake each one out to find all the money Luvia had left hidden.

From Barre Daily Times 4/17/1930



Luvia & George Lafirira



Luvia and George were partial to German Shepherds and always had them in the house. Their daughter Irene bred them. During psychic readings Luvia's dog Trixie would sit next to her. One customer noticed Luvia slowly stroking her dog's soft head. "Do you get psychic vibrations from the dogs head?" she asked.

George Sr farmed, but also was a cattle dealer and trucked cattle in the area. He was called to a farm in the fall one year to pick up a cow to go to the slaughter house since she wasn't able to stand up. Turns out she had gotten extremely drunk on rotting apples. They managed to get her onto George's truck so they could take her to the slaughter house as instructed. Instead, George took her home to his farm. They slid her out of the truck on some pieces of metal roofing and eventually George was able to get her sobered up and standing. They bred her and used her for years "vealing off" young stock before she finally went to the slaughter house as an old lady.

Luvia's brother Mark Page and the Lafirira family were hauling manure one summer, using horses, spending long days going back and forth from barn to fields. Mark bemoaned how boring and undignified it was to "shovel shit" and asked Luvia to go in the house and see if the dictionary had a better word to call said shit. She presented him with a new alternative and Mark was much happier "drawing excrement" from then on. Luvia liked to sit out on the porch that faced the road. Mark would sometimes drive the horse & wagon along the road, would have a chat with her as he went slowly by, never quite stopping. He would later join the Army to go to the Korean war where he tragically died in a Korean prison camp in 1952 when his twin daughters Barbara and Sandra were 2 years old.

Luvia's brother Walter (1904 - 1981) in Plainfield never had a license or owned a car. He walked everywhere, including to N. Montpelier, where Audrey thinks he worked at the mill. He would visit George and Luvia, but never came in the house. He would chat with them from the road. He had Parkinson's according to his death record and died of cancer and diabetes in a veteran's home in New Hampshire.

The Lafiriras moved to another farm in Marshfield in 1951, the current 192 Lafiria Place (another spelling variation!) off Rte 2. It would be the first time they had a house with a flush toilet and a bathtub. Luvia continued giving readings in her new home. In fact I went for a reading around 1972, since many of my Goddard friends were big fans. She also had a famous family of orange and white cats whose kittens were in much demand.

Luvia died on 4/11/1977 of a cerebral blood clot, related to her diabetes. She was 74 years old and had had heart disease for 5 years. George Lafirira died on 6/6/1984 of a brain aneurism related to arteriosclerosis. He was 90 years old. They are buried in the Plainmont Cemetery.

More of Audrey's Memories of N Montpelier

She had friends all over the E. Montpelier Village School district

Times Argus image of traverse sled in Montpelier, Vermont



that included N. Montpelier, and in winter would join groups of friends taking a long Traverse sled (traditionally used for winter logging) from N. Montpelier a mile up a big hill. The top was at the intersection of Taylor Farm Rd and what she called "Burnham Rd" - now a trail shown on the maps on Pg 22-23. Six to eight people would pile on and slide down so fast they ended up skidding out onto Rte 14 in N. Montpelier. I walked the trail recently and it has some steep hills but also some flatter areas and rises, so the sled had to be going very fast to get all the way down to Rte 14 without stopping. Newspapers from the early 1900s had many used farm

Traverse Sled on display in the Sugar on Snow Room at Morse Farm



equipment ads and they often included traverse sleds. I've read they were precursors to bobsleds.

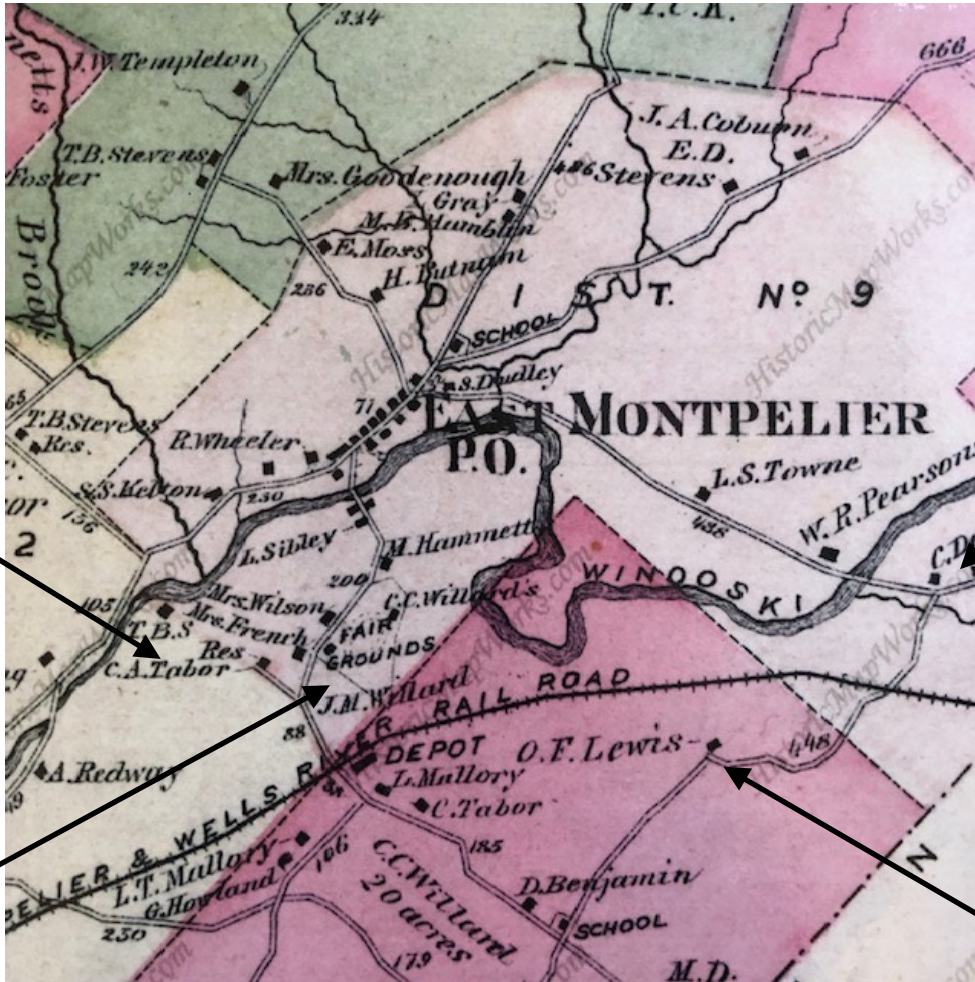
Audrey and Gloria would ride their bikes around the loop from E. Montpelier to N. Montpelier to the Rte 214/ Rte 2 intersection. She remembered each leg being three miles, so three + three + three miles is a nine mile loop. Audrey described it just that way.

There was a store on the northeast corner of the Rte 14 and Rte 214 intersection run by the Clarks. Audrey's cousin Ann's mother was a Clark. Audrey's best friend Gloria Lafirira used to pick catnip for the store to sell. She got 10 cents a bunch. The white building still stands and was last a store in the 2000s.

6. George & Audrey get married & start their farm life*****

George Lafirira and Audrey Daniels were married September 29, 1951 soon after George's parents Luvia and George Sr. moved to the new farm in Marshfield. The marriage certificate lists George as a saw mill hand - he worked for her father at Wrightsville. They would have 4 children - Ronald 1953, Sheryl 1955, Dale 1966 and Julie 1968. At first they lived on the third floor of her grandfather Harry's three story house on Rte 2. Within a year or two they bought their own farm on the current Lylehaven Rd off Rte 14, now part of Fairmont Farm. See maps on the next page. They had 36 Jerseys. George loved Jerseys and disliked Guernseys. He also didn't care for horses, unlike his father the World War I teamster.

They got their animal feed nearby at the Checkerboard Feed store next to the Fair Mont railroad station on the Barre Rd as Audrey called it - the current Rte 14. The feed came by rail until 1956 when the train stopped running. They were able to get most other supplies at Batchelder's Heating, Plumbing & Hardware in Plainfield.



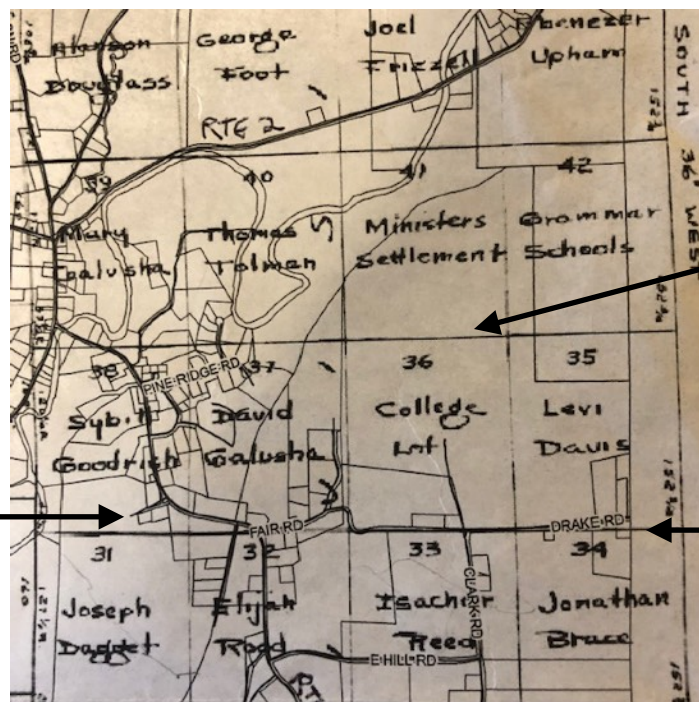
Lafirira farm was where CA Tabor house was in 1800s.

Fairgrounds in 1800s - location of landing strip, hay field, current Hangar Bldg at 1970 Rte 14.

Existing brick house - 4243 US Rte 2, Classic Auto

Orlando F. Lewis farm - original 1800s 200 Acre Field on old road. Farm road still there from school site (gone) to Lewis farm site (gone). Trail east of that.

1790 Land Plot Map numbered squares with current boundary & 2000s road overlay:



#41 & #36 Plots are location of 200 Acre Field

Location of 1800s C.A. Tabor farm that became Lafirira Farm, now Fairmont Farm.

This map shows how Drake Rd continued through to Fair Rd., later thrown up.

They first used a spring off the old railroad bed for water but it wasn't reliable. The farm fields were behind the barn and they hayed the old airfield runway across the road. Audrey didn't have a driver's license but drove the tractor all over the farm.

They later bought 200 acres up on East Hill and kept 40 acres for hay, pasturing the rest. They got the "200 Acre Field" from the Camire family from Barre. Audrey's sister in law Irene had married Marcelle Camire. They accessed the field by going up East Hill Rd, then left on Clark Rd, and going straight across Drake Rd onto the farm road. Another way was to take a tractor east on the old railroad bed to a right hand farm road. The beginning of that road was steep so George drove up that part and then let Audrey take over. When George was working on that land he would remind Audrey to pack him a lunch pail. "Even the woodchucks pack a lunch" he said.

From 1800s maps you can see that road once went from Drake Rd all the way downhill to Rte 2 near the old brick farmhouse that is now 4243 US Rte 2 - Classic Auto. The railroad was built in 1867 and crossed that old road, which is now used by the snowmobile club, and the railroad bed is now part of the Cross Vermont Trail.

200 Acre Field history: *This was the Orlando F. Lewis farm in the 1800s, showing on the 1873 map on previous page, The land has always been farmed since then, although the farm buildings burned in the 1920s. Clearly it was valued by generations of farmers since it was never left to grow up to woods like so many farms from the 1800s.*

Audrey used to write two checks a year as part of a lease agreement for the 200 Acre Field. \$10 went to UVM and \$12 went to a local church, rather than paying town tax. This rang a bell with me since I've been researching early E. Montpelier farms. In the late 1700s when each Vermont town was divided into the first plots to sell, several were set aside to be leased so proceeds went to local schools and churches instead of the grand list for town taxes. When I looked at the 1790s map of plots I found "College Lot", "Minister's Settlement" in the area of the 200 Acre Field. George and Audrey's lease agreement was the very last one for that land. When they sold in 1969, it was added back to the town grand list so the next owner would pay taxes to the town.

The 1873 map on the previous page also shows the Fairground where the Washington County Fair was held every year back then. That level land has a history:

Orlando F. Lewis won prizes there - See clipping on right. It was the air strip, and the hanger is still there. It was one of the Lafirira's hayfields. North Country Federal Credit Union was built. Audrey's last house was located there on Carleton Blvd.

Audrey's Farm Stories

One time the heifers they kept up on the 200 Acre Field got out - someone had cut the fence. It was late fall and they had no idea where to look for them. Luckily it had snowed the night before and they were able to find hoof prints that led them to the herd of

1854 newspaper list of Fair prizes. O. F. Lewis had good pigs.

Agricultural.	
WASHINGTON COUNTY SHOW AND FAIR, 1854.	
Reports of the Committees.	
SWINE.	
Best Boar, 1st Prem.	O. F. Lewis, \$4,00
" Brood Sow, "	O. F. Lewis, 4,00
" 5 Pigs, "	O. F. Lewis, 3,00
W. D. WARREN, for Committee.	
POULTRY.	
Best pair of Geese,	O. Lewis, 1,00
2d "	" " ,50
Best pr. of Hens,	A. D. Arms, 1,00
2d "	S. F. Stevens, ,50
Best lot of Fowls,	S. F. Stevens, 2,00
The show of Poultry was small.	
A. D. ARMS, } Committee.	
GEO. C. SHEPHERD, }	

heifers over near the Smith Farm on Country Club Rd near Route 2. They drove them back home.

When Audrey was doing the morning milking before sun up she would leave the dark house with four kids sleeping. 12 year old Sheryl was to wake baby Julie, and feed her breakfast. Audrey would peek at the house during milking to make sure the lights came on at the right time. When Audrey came in the house Sheryl would joke with her that she had forgotten to feed Julie. Joking seems to be a family hobby.

George had a regular early morning game of Cribbage at the farm with his friend Paul Gallerani of Rightway Commission Livestock Sales on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Audrey would make them coffee. Paul had made sure his calls came to the Lafirira's, and Audrey kept a pad of paper by the phone to write down the addresses of where Paul was supposed to pick up calves after they were done with Cribbage. Cribbage was a very important matter!

The Barn Fire

In the middle of the night on October 16, 1961 Audrey was up with little Ron who was sick. She happened to look out the window and was shocked to see flames coming from the barn. She woke George and phoned the Montpelier Fire Department. They waited nervously for the firetrucks to get there. The East Montpelier Fire Department would be started 3 years later in 1964.

Luckily it was a warm night so George had decided they should put the cows out to pasture one more night before switching to the winter system of keeping them in the barn, plus a turnout into the barnyard for a few hours after morning milking. Edna, Vene Morse's wife was one of the first people to see the barn burning from her house across the valley up Cherry Tree Hill Rd, the house Audrey's grandfather had built. She brought them down fresh made donuts the next day. The Montpelier Fire Dept showed up quickly. Later a fire fighter would say it was a quick trip to the farm since the road from Montpelier to E. Montpelier (from Rte 302 intersection to E. Montpelier Village) had just been paved for the first time. George's mother Luvia, the well known psychic, said she had had a feeling of foreboding and later realized that when she had seen the glow to the west of her new farm, it was her son and daughter in law's barn burning. They were never quite sure where the fire started. People suspected the silo but it was empty. The silo made the fire worse since it drew like a chimney. After the fire was out, and the house saved, the firemen helped herd 25 milking Jerseys into the one car garage. The cows were scared of the firemen and wanted to go back in the barn. Once they were inside the garage it was a tight fit according to Audrey. Bob Simon, who built my E. Montpelier house told me he helped fight the fire. He and others would start the EM fire Dept 3 years later.

They then had Paul Gallerani truck the cows to George's parents' new farm past Plainfield off Route 2, the current 192 Lafiria Place (another spelling variation!) but things didn't work out since the cows didn't like the hay there. It had gotten wet and was not good dry hay like they were used to on their own farm. Also the farm was having trouble getting enough water to the barn so Paul Gallerani offered to truck the cows to Bradford to run a special sale so they could sell off the herd. He kept the traumatized cows there until they calmed down and started handling milking better. He even donated his fee. At the end of the auction George stood up and thanked Paul, who said "George has just said thank you but I don't know what for."

They would later buy more Jerseys at Rightway's after they rebuilt the barn in 1962. They added modern updates like a bulk tank and electric bars over cow's backs so they would back up over manure trench to relieve themselves. Audrey still hated to hear about fires when she listened to her police scanner, even 60 years after theirs.



George and Audrey farmed until 1969 when George decided to try something new, after all those years of being tied to the farm. They sold to MacNoble Farms of Lower Cabot, farmers with a good reputation. George and Audrey moved next door to 40 Lylehaven Rd at the corner of Rte 14 after giving up the farm.

George went on to be the State Livestock Inspector, living a life on the road when traveling to inspect farms. He once visited a farm on Peacham Rd and as he approached he smelled the rank odor of death. Most of the herd was dead on the ground. The bull had no water, and it looked like the water pail had been tied up so he couldn't get to it. During the interview the farmer joked "Take my wife, she's all dressed". George reported the situation to the police and they arrested the farmer, who went to jail. They had to dig a trench to bury the cows, and they burned the barn to the ground.

George Page Lafirira died 4/14/1984 of Cancer of the Esophagus when the kids were 16, 18, 22, and 35. He had been sick for 3 months before his death. Once George died Audrey took several jobs. She worked as an assistant in the kitchen making hot lunch at East Montpelier Elementary School, taking over for her step mother Clopha when she became ill. Audrey assisted Ethel Vasher who ran the kitchen. They made everything from scratch. Audrey still didn't have a license so she rode the school bus to work, and then got a ride home from Ethel who lived in Barre. She ate hot lunch every school day after making it. She took over running the kitchen when Ethel retired, and then left that job in 1993 at age 62.

Then she worked for Morse Farm Sugarworks for 20 years serving sugar on snow and making candy, among other things, plus baking 30 pies a week for them to sell. Her daughter Sheryl worked at the counter with her. At first the Morses picked her up at her house, but finally Sheryl taught her to drive, Audrey got her license, and she bought a little 2 door Chrysler. Elliott Morse would introduce visitors to her as "my great, great, great grandmother". He was about 8 years younger than she was. She retired from Morse's at age 82, but kept supplying them with crocheted towels to sell. Last year she gave me a few for my bathrooms.

Conclusion

Until her death Audrey lived alone in her tidy little house on Carleton Boulevard, the sixth house she had lived in, all under two miles from each other. She reached her almost 91 years clear headed and independent, speaking to her hardy genes. Her son Dale and daughters Sheryl and Julie cared for her every need. She made many towels and afghans. Why sit idle? "Audrey do your hands ever hurt from all that crocheting ? "Oh, no, I'd say not." Her style of speech brought local history to life when we talked, with sayings I had never heard. Her voice will stay with me.

Afgan was pronounced *"Af-uh-gun"*

Daniels was pronounced: *"Dannuls"*

Referring to someone who didn't like spending money: *"He was tight as bark on a tree."*

Someone was not trustworthy: *"He was so crooked he couldn't lay straight in the bed."*

I ask her if she's free to talk today: *"I'm right home."*

Talking about something inconsequential: *"It's like a fart in the whirlwind."*

If someone was intoxicated: *"He was drunker than a hoot owl."*

Someone wasn't too sensible: *"He didn't have two oars in the water."*

A husband had a wandering eye: *"Mr So & So jumped the fence."*

If she ever mentioned something private, like for instance WHO jumped the fence she followed it with " Now, that's not nice" with a little laugh. Then I knew not to write that down.

Audrey was a bright light, maintaining a sunny outlook as her world became smaller with age, always ready with a joke. How she laughed telling me how her son Dale suggested putting wheels on her walker and sending her down the hill from the hospital to the Barre Montpelier Rd. She periodically suggested we should go for a drive, touring the graveyards we had talked about so much, but I just said "maybe someday" and let it go. Covid prevented it. I'm sad we never did, but it's comforting to know that soon I can keep visiting her at her grave in the Plainmont Cemetery next to many of her friends and family members. I know her family will plant flowers by her grave. She was a big fan of flowers. Rest well Audrey. You lived a rich life and will be missed.

Audrey Daniels Lafirira - Born May 14 1931 - Died February 20 2022, aged 90 years

She leaves many grand children and great grand children.



BIRTH FEMALE.			
Town or City	Montpelier, Vt.	If birth occurred in Hospital, give name	Heaton Hospital
Name of Child	Daniels, Audrey Myrle		
Twin, Triplet or Other	No. in Order of Birth	1	Procedure
			Full Term
			Legitimate
Date of Birth	Month	Day	Year
	May	14th	1931
Full Name of Father	Earle Clifton Daniels		
Residence	East Montpelier, Vt.	Color	White
		Age	27
Birthplace (City or Place)	East Montpelier	(State or Country)	Vt.
Occupation (Particular Kind of Work Done)	Works in Saw Mills		
Date last Engaged in this Work	May 13th. 1931	Total time spent in this Work	5yrs.
Full Maiden Name of Mother	Myrle Blanche Gray		
Residence	East Montpelier, Vt.	Color	White
		Age	28
Birthplace (City or Place)	Calais	(State or Country)	Vt.
Occupation (Particular Kind of Work Done)	Housewife Home		
Date Last Engaged in this work	May 13th 1931	Total time spent in this work	5yrs.
No. of Children born to this Mother, including present birth	1		
No. of Children born alive and now living	1		