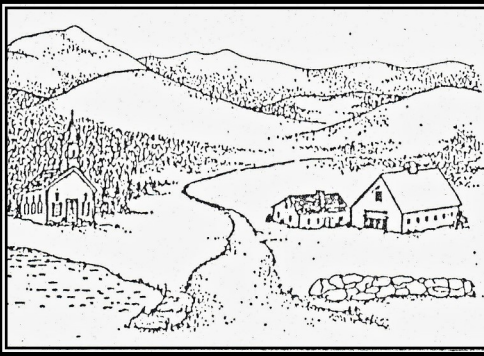




Chatham Times

Past and Present

Mildred and Loren Andrews – An Unlikely Love Story

By Susan Wheaton Logan

My grandmother, Mildred Webber Curtis, was born in 1901 into a prominent family in the small farming community of Monroe, Maine, near Belfast. She was an only child and attended schools in Monroe and Brooks, Maine, before graduating from Farmington State Teachers College, the precursor to the University of Maine at Farmington. While in college, she married Clarence Dickey, the son of another prominent Monroe family, and together they had two children: my mother Ola-Mae and her brother Elwyn.

Clarence was 10 years older than Mildred and had attended the University of Maine with Charles A. Snow of the Fryeburg area. The two were already friends when my grandmother married Clarence, and the Dickeys often visited and fished with the Snows in North Chatham, where Charles had a small camp on the banks of Cold River.

Both Mildred and Clarence were teachers in the Farmington area, with Clarence going on to become Superintendent of Schools in Phillips, near there. I don't know any details of their marriage, other than it wasn't a particularly happy one. Clarence (I've never considered him to be a "real" grandfather) was a philanderer, and my grandmother divorced him in 1935. That was a *huge* scandal at the time. Years later, my mom told me that, unlike another classmate whose parents had divorced, she and Uncle Elwyn were never ostracized or bullied by the other children because of the affection and respect with which her grandparents were regarded in their tight-knit community.

In 1936, Charles Snow offered my grandmother a teaching position at the Stow School, and she began there in January of 1937. The position paid \$20 a



Mildred Webber Curtis 1940



Original House on Union Hill

month, and janitorial duties were included in the contract's job description. Family lore has it that, during a snowstorm that first winter, my grandmother's car wouldn't start and, as she was trudging along what is now Route 113 to the house in which she boarded, a truck pulled up, and she was offered a ride. The driver was Loren Andrews of North Chatham, and the rest, as they say, is history.

At the time, my grandfather was living with his parents, Herbert and Maggie Andrews, on the family farm at the bottom of Evans Notch. After a respectable time of courting, he asked my grandmother to marry him, but she refused until he could provide for her "a proper home."

And so he located a small c. 1850s cape on Union Hill in Lovell and, according to my mother's notes, purchased it from Pope Howard, who was married to Maggie Andrews' aunt. However, according to David

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Notes from the President

A wet summer in Chatham has made haying, gardening, and scheduling outdoor events challenging.

But we had a nice morning July 15th for our talk in the Chatham Center Cemetery by Bob Hanscom. Bob takes his family on an annual visit to their ancestors' graves, recounting the stories of their lives and their neighbors. It was super (and inspired me to introduce my 5-year-old grandson to his ancestors in the Eastman/Charles Cemetery). We then moved to the schoolhouse for refreshments.

On August 13 we sold lunch and Chatham goods at the Summer Bazaar at the Fryeburg Fairgrounds. Thank you to Alina Eastman for donating the space for us; and to Beverly and Scott Aiman, Alan Eastman, Gail Calomb, Sue Crowley, Paul Loscocco, Ann Fargo, and Judy Bailey for baking, grilling, and manning the sales table; and to Kim Callen and Suburban Propane for a tent and fuel for the grill.

Our August 25 Ice Cream Social was moved into our classroom because of the wetness. Thank you to Ann Fargo for chairing the event, to The Four Stingers who put on a great ukulele concert of pop music, and to volunteers Margery Eastman and Maria Palmisano. Many hands made light work!

A huge thanks to Susan Logan for recording her family's history in our lead article and an invitation to any others who'd like to contribute their knowledge a part of Chatham's history to our newsletter!

Jeanne Eastman

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We look forward to seeing you!

The Peddler's Pack

a bundle of news from the neighbors over the years

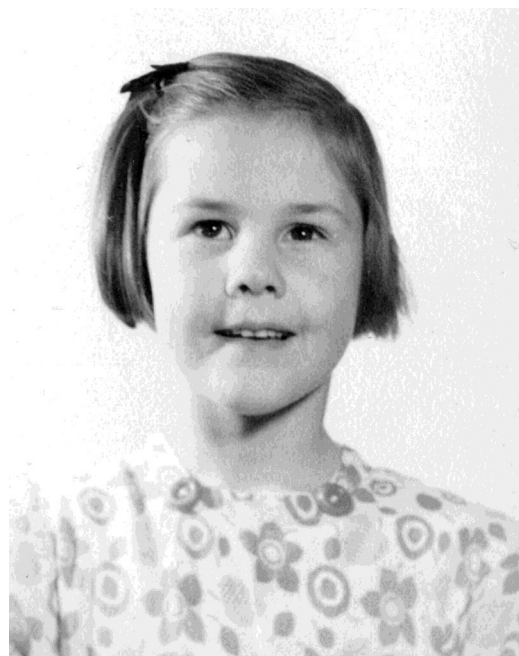
Chester Eastman in 1952, by an unnamed interviewer: As I sit here with Chester who is now 87 years old, he tells me that the first thing he remembers is his first day at school (Eastman School, 1870). His mother took the teacher to her house to board, because little Chester was afraid to go to school and his mother wanted him to have a chance to get acquainted with the teacher before school started. Miss Abbie Walker was his first teacher, and his first day at school he ran home at recess. Shame.

Jim Wilfong – My mother seemed to know when the peddler, Salem Solomon, would be coming. Seems like it was about the first week of August. She'd make sure we were all home. She's have us strip down to our under-shorts and try on clothes until we found what fit. It didn't matter if we liked the clothes or not.

David Crouse: In the 1940s and 1950s, when I was growing up in Stow, my parents raised a few chickens/hens. A grain truck stopped about every week, and my mother would buy grain in cotton bags that were printed with a variety of designs. She and many others in the valley made clothing, pillow cases, etc. from those bags. At least once, maybe more, she made my sister a dress out of grain bags, which caused some kids at school to call my sister "The Grain Bag Girl." Many years later, my sister wrote the following poem about that incident:

The Grain Bag Girl By June Crouse Kelley

My name became "the grain bag girl"
One day when I was nine.
My Mom made me a pretty dress;
I was so happy it was mine.
She picked out red soldiers on a white background
From the grain truck that delivered by the pound.
She put red ribbons on the neck and sleeves,
And its pretty gathered skirt swirled in the breeze.
Oh, I did so love my pretty new dress,
Until at school, when we went for recess,
My classmates didn't go by the Golden Rule,
And my spirit was tarnished that day at school.
–Until later a boy said he loved my new dress,
And from then on I didn't care what was said by the rest.
He lifted my spirits; he gave me back my self esteem.
It taught me a lesson: Not all children are mean.



June Crouse - 1946 wearing the grain bag dress

Crouse, “I know that Maggie Andrews’ aunt Esther J. Irvine married Joseph Cushman Howard (known as ‘Cush’ Howard) on 5 April 1881, and they lived on the Barbour Road in Stow. Esther died in 1912, and ‘Cush’ died in 1922, but their house is still standing. So I can’t figure out exactly where the house Loren tore down was located. I have no knowledge of a “Pope Howard” and assume it may be “Cush Howard,” although he died 17 years before Loren married Mildred....”

The location and seller of Grampa’s house are in question at this point (and I’ve resolved to research that further), but the fact remains that for \$50 he bought a house on Union Hill, dismantled it, and with the help of Henry Wardwell’s father, moved it by oxen to North Chatham where it was rebuilt, the roof was raised, and there the house still sits with various modifications that have taken place over the years.

My grandparents were married in May of 1939 by Rev. Rice of the New Church in Fryeburg. A year later, Grampa built a garage directly on the main road so that, according to my mother, his mother couldn’t look into his house from her living room. Ola-Mae’s name and handprints are in the cement floor along with the date “1940.”

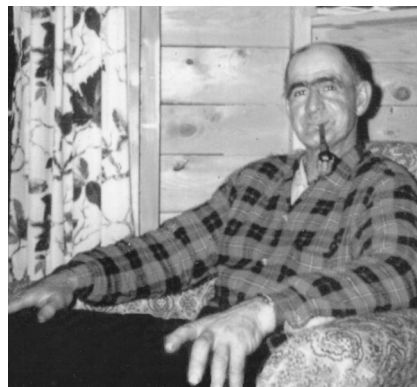
When Grammie first relocated to Stow following her divorce, my mother and her brother Elwyn stayed behind on the family farm in Monroe. They adored their grandparents, Mary Jane (Webber) and Nelson “Gink” Curtis, and they loved the farm. Ola-Mae moved to North Chatham in 1941, arriving by bus in Fryeburg, so that she could attend Fryeburg Academy and be with her mother. Uncle Elwyn stayed behind because

“he was needed on the farm” as his grandparents grew older. I’ve often wondered how he felt about not joining them and if he grew to resent having the assumed responsibility of the farm thrust onto his young shoulders. My great-grandfather died in 1952. It’s telling that soon after my great-grandmother’s death in 1964, Uncle Elwyn and his wife Phyllis sold the farm, and the family moved to Bethel, Maine. He was the Town Manager there until 1975, when he died suddenly of a heart attack during a minor surgical procedure.

My grandfather Loren was a well-known woodsman, hunter, and guide, and soon the Andrews began taking in boarders year-round, with hunting season being their busiest time of year. Early in the morning, my grandmother would make the men (and they were all men then) a hearty breakfast, pack their lunches, and head to school, then serve a family-style dinner later. The daily cost per person in the 1950s was \$7.50, which included a bed, three square meals a day, and taxes. I’ve seen a little notebook where she kept track of her menus and receipts, and she faithfully sent off the 4% NH Rooms and Meals Taxes to Concord each month.



Harold and Winnie Andrews 1949



Loren Andrews 1962

One of my first memories is looking over my grandfather’s shoulder from my perch in his backpack as he fished in the Cold River behind the one home that has been a constant in my life. My sisters and I, along with our little brother Elwyn, were gifted fishing poles as children, then when we turned 12, rifles. We grew up with guns but always with a healthy respect for the animals that they brought down. Some were killed as threats to livestock; more commonly, for furs and food. Years ago, my mom told me that, when I was little, there wouldn’t have been meat on our table had it not been for Grandpa’s venison in the freezer.

Loren had three brothers and a younger sister - Angus, Harold, Urban, and Erma - all of whom lived in the immediate area. Harold lived with Herbert and Maggie, too, and met his future wife Wilhelmina “Winnie” (Paine) at my parents’ wedding in North Chatham in 1947. Winnie had been a good friend and classmate of my mother’s at the Roosevelt School of Nursing in New York City, which was where my mom and dad met when he was in the Navy. The two of them had grown up about an hour from each other in rural Maine but connected in the Big City years later. Small world!

Mildred taught at the Stow School from 1937 to 1952 (with a six-month break in 1945, not sure why). David Crouse devoted almost an entire issue to the school and my grandparents in 2005, and here is an excerpt from that excellent issue:

Continued on Page 5

Excerpted from Cold River Chronicle, Issue No. 39, April 2005

School under the tutelage of Mildred Andrews was for me (and undoubtedly many others) a very exciting and memorable experience. We covered the "Three R's"—or at least I assume we did—but reading, writing, and arithmetic aren't the things that make those six and a half years of my life memorable. It's the extracurricular activities that permeated Mrs. Andrews' program that stand out most vividly in my mind.

Hardly a school day passed that we weren't preparing to stage one event or another—events that ranged from rummage sales to Valentine's Day parties, always intermixed with plays, pageants, minstrel shows, and even a couple of operettas. These ever-present productions caused some people in town to glibly refer to the Stow Grammar School as the Stow Drama School.

At one point, near the end of my grammar school career, money realized from rummage sales and the sales of items such as garden seeds, oven liners, magazines, etc. enabled us students to hire a part-time music teacher who added a somewhat more professional touch to our stage productions. In fact, we got to be so good that one of our operettas went "on the road" and played in the big city, at the Red Men's Hall in Mud City (North Fryeburg).

I certainly believe that Mrs. Andrews' true calling in life was to have been a movie producer or at least a Broadway play director; but fortunately for those of us growing up in Stow, she found her calling in our isolated mountain valley and instilled in many of her students the idea that anything is possible if you simply set out to do it.....

Mildred Andrews' school was in actuality one big family. If some of the children needed clothing or even a bath, Mildred provided. If some students needed extra help with their schoolwork, then older students were directed to tutor them. When it became clear that a full-length school day was too much for kindergarten kids, Mildred decided that they should be able to take an afternoon nap—so some of the older boys found a cot frame at a local dumping area, Mildred provided a mattress for it, and a kindergarten napping area was established behind the school piano.

Realizing that some children did not bring much to eat for lunch, Mildred established the school's first hot lunch program by asking those who were able to bring cans of soup, which were consolidated into one big pot and served to all at lunch. When more bookcases were needed at the school, Mildred suggested that students seek out empty wooden orange crates from local stores. When it was reported that a moose had been seen in a field at Fryeburg Harbor, Mildred packed the whole school population (probably not more than a dozen children at the time) into her car and drove down to see the creature—and the list goes on. I'm sure that other former Stow School students can add considerably to what I have just listed.

Figuring also into this big family atmosphere was Mildred's husband, Loren, who from time to time would stop by the school to show us kids a bear or a wildcat he had just shot, and while he was there he would usually relate some of the many stories for which he was famous. At the end of each school year, Mildred and Loren entertained the school at a picnic, usually held at their home in North Chatham. The Cold River in their back



Mildred Andrews' Class

Mildred Andrews retired from the Maine Schools to teach in No. Chatham, NH.

Mildred and Loren Andrews - Continued from page 5

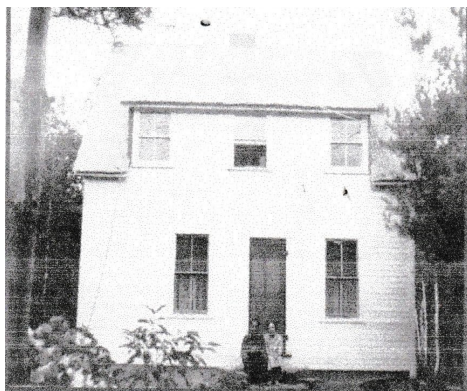
yard provided a place for swimming, and Loren would often lead trips to places in the area such as the Chandler mine, the Deer Hill Spring and the summit of Deer Hill. On several evenings in the spring Loren took a group of schoolboys on a suckering expedition to such places as Little Cold River and Bickford Brook. Part of the ritual included building a campfire and roasting suckers. Although Loren seemed to delight in eating these bony creatures, I don't remember that many of us boys joined in his feast...

(Anyone who would like the entire issue can email David at chronicle93@myfairpoint.net)

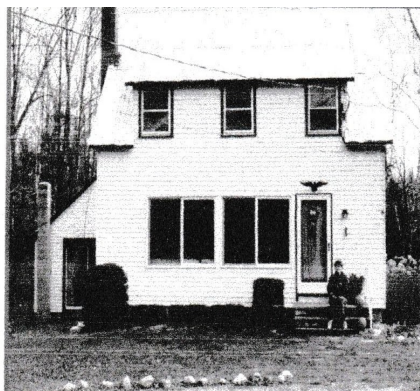
From the Stow School, my grandmother taught at the Sadie F. Adams school in North Fryeburg, before leaving there in 1961 and going to the Center Chatham School. My parents, Lou and Ola-Mae Wheaton lived in Maine, so school vacations for us were always a week before or after the NH schools. My sister Andrea and I would stay in North Chatham during these vacations and go to school with Grammie. I still remember the delicious smells of soups or American Chop Suey cooking for lunch and the chalk boards that were lined with the Palmer Method cursive alphabet.

Though none of the elementary schools that I attended could ever be considered large, having the one-room schoolhouse experience, if only for a couple of weeks a year, is a lovely memory that stays with me to this day. I feel so blessed to have grown up in North Chatham and grateful that, through my son Jonathan, the home there remains in the family. My brother Elwyn's house is the next lot over, beside the Snows' old camp on Cold River.

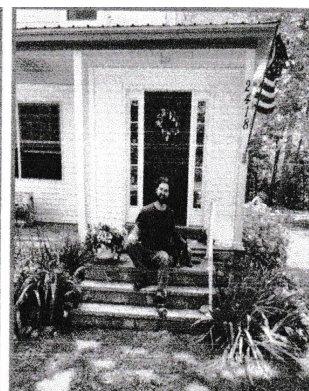
Our grandparents would have been so pleased.



Loren and Mildred Andrews 1939



Susan Wheaton 1986



Jonathan Logan 2023



Some of you might recognize a young Bill Perry in this photo, (front row, third from the left) who is not identified. That's because "There was a two or three week orientation as I would have been in kindergarten, and school back then started in 1st grade," according to Bill. "So officially, I wasn't enrolled yet."

Chatham Center School, 1967-68.

The last one-room, 8 grades, school in New Hampshire.

The school closed in June 1968.

Student listing from 1967 Town Report

By Grades:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1: Ellen Emerson
Julie Layne | 6: Ronald Briggs
Perley Head |
| 2: Marcia Briggs
Michael Layne | Roger Johnson
Janice Layne |
| Susan Wilfong
Deborah Johnson | Brandon Smith
Russell Wilfong |
| 3: Russell Charles
Edward Layne | 8: Peggy Eastman
Carol Smith |
| 4: Kathleen Emerson
5: Richard Charles | Dwight Wentworth
John Johnson |
| Deborah Emerson
Joyce Layne | |

Old Bill Says

by Bill Sanborn, published in the *Advertiser-Democrat*, Feb 19, 1954

I can remember when I was a boy of going to different houses for a “paring bee.” The men would be seated at a long table with a bushel of apples beside them in another chair. Their paring machine fastened to the table, they would pare the apple and the women would have a little knife they would split them and core them and the children would have a long needle, usually made out of umbrella wire, threaded with twine; and as fast as they would fill a string it would be hung up on a rack like a screen frame with nails in it which would be set outside the house to dry. After the apples were out of the way they would take down the kitchen stove and put me in a chair in the sink, where I would fiddle for them to have a kitchen dance till 2 o'clock, when we set the stove back and went home.

In Memory

Our deep sympathy to the families of these loved ones:

Steve Oppenheim, 85; passed away June 6. Steve served in the Army, and was trained as a medic. His career included managing service stations, “flipping” houses, working as an oil trader for Astroline Corp., and running Baldface Books. He volunteered with Fryeburg Rescue, Habitat for Humanity, CASA, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. He and his wife, Judy Bailey, took twice-yearly cross-country trips to New Mexico where they spent the winters. He led the way on many adventures.

Robert Hurst, 74; passed away July 22. Bob loved spending time with family and friends and tending his produce garden. He worked as a finish carpenter, with an eye for detail. He was a member of the Rosicrucian Order.

Donations

George Perry – a large hand saw that was in the barn when his family moved to Chatham in 1954; a rose bush originally from the Binford/Marshall Place on Toad Hill Road. **Susan Logan** – three christening dresses, scrap books, family documents. **Frank Eastman** – a sweater knit by his sister, Jean, for his wife, Barbara, on their 25th wedding anniversary. **Emily Fernald** – Wit and Wisdom, by Jo Radner. **Steve Eastman** – long snowshoes used by his father, Harry. **David Crouse** – enlarged prints of photos to be used in our exhibit at Fryeburg Fair. **In Memory of Barbara Eastman** – Denise Stanford, John Chandler, Sue Crowley, D. Russell Cromwell, Emily Fernald, the Wilshusen Family, Megan Walsh, Nancy & Andrew Welch, Robert Andrews & Family, James & Denise Stanford, John & Brenda Chandler, Henry Mock, the Calomb, McGrath, and Downs Families, the Hale Family, Susan Eastman, Robert Dietz, Richard Anderson, Donese Oliver. **Donations to General Fund** – Gail Calomb, Wayne Infinger, Berthold & Valerie Horn, Robert Dietz. Thank you so much for your generous support.

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