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Franconia Remembrances

Grandpa always had two barrels of apples down cellar. We could have one if we wanted. One of us would be elected every night to go down and get the apples. They were an after dinner treat.

We used to walk in the snow to school and we had to wear long underwear. My grandmother insisted you wear long underwear. Margaret (her cousin) and I would wear it to school and then take it off. When Grammy came to do the wash, she'd say "Your underwear didn't get very dirty this week, did it?" She had an idea what we were doing.

(At Dow Academy) apparently I liked writing but you would never know it by my writing now. My teacher used to have all the kids – we did arm – penmanship practice - you had to use your arm. This teacher turned out to be my aunt later. She was a Mrs. – what was her name – Amy Dexter. Whoever was doing well in penmanship, she'd stop the class and make them come over around my desk and watch me do this arm movement. I don't write very well now.

The other thing in school I remember was when I – Margaret and I - were out swinging and this boy that we both liked – was Nelson's grandson – here for the holidays I guess or something because he didn't go to school there. It was recess time and he was pumping all the girls up, taking turns – pumping them up on the swings. I guess they did take those swings down. He said "Well, it's your turn next Ruby." So, I'm standing there waiting and the school bell rang to go in. I ran right underneath the swing and got knocked right out completely. Mrs. Dexter took me over to the cottage – the cottages are gone now too. She took me over there, set me on the trunk in the window, and I looked down the window. She was washing my face and trying to clean up the blood. I looked out and Margaret was down there laughing at me. She thought it was a big joke, me getting knocked out. I lost a lot of time out of school at that time so I had a lot to catch up on.

Lurlene and I always belonged to the church committee—it was the committee of giving aid to the people overseas. Rev. Briggs was here at the time and they organized a trip to Guatemala. Lurlene and I signed up for it. Elizabeth Herbert went too and quite a few others. We all got on the school bus and went all the way across country to Mexico. The only thing we ever stopped for was just to eat. The only pictures I have of the whole trip was when we were

all eating. You would think we were on a big picnic everywhere. That's what it was as we all brought things to eat for the picnic all the way across country. When we got to the Mexican border, they stopped us, cause here was a school bus with all adults. They didn't think much of that and they knew we weren't going to school. They were really quite upset because we were adults. The minister that came on the bus and joined us from Brownsville, Texas, he went into the office and explained what we were doing. He had the longest time in there. When he came out he said "Just like everything else, you have to pay him in order for us to get by." So he helped us out really. I believe we were there for an hour cause we got out of the bus and walked around. It was beautiful country there. I think that was the highlight of our life – that was one thing we would never forget.

I always had a lot of sports in high school. At that time I was living downtown with my Dad and my step-mother. I remember this man came along. He enjoyed baseball. He sat there watching us, but he had on a dress suit. I said to one of the girls "Can you imagine a man coming to watch a ballgame in a dress suit?" Then they asked him to umpire, so he took his coat off and threw it on the bench, right where we happened to be sitting. I looked at my friend, I think Pauline Brooks, "Did you see he has a white handkerchief in his pocket?" We had a good kick out of that. We didn't know who he was. I walked back and forth to school. When I came up from school one day he was sitting on the steps right in front of where Kenny Ford lives now. He smiled at me. I completely ignored him as I was going to school and that was all I was thinking about. When I came back – oh, every time I would go by, he was looking for me to come back and forth, you know. After a while I found out who he was. He was Wyman Heath's brother. He had just come back from overseas, he had been in the service and he came back to Canada – he was at that time living in Sherbrooke and he came back and was going to make his home here with Red. Red was going to get him a job. So I met him finally. After walking up through – by so many times, he stopped me one day and asked me who I was and so forth. So, he was the man I finally married.

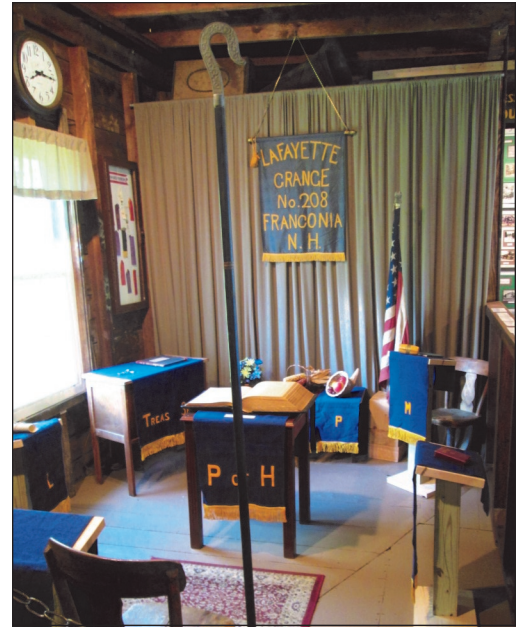
[Excerpts from an interview with Ruby Herbert Heath (1916-2008) in 1997. Ruby and Bill Heath Sr. bought the Franconia Village Store in 1956.]

Feature Exhibit – The Grange: a voice for the farmers

The Heritage Museum is offering its exhibit on The Grange for a second season. If you didn't visit the museum last season, we invite you to come and learn the history of the Grange nationally and see how Lafayette Grange #208 played an important role in the social life of Franconia for almost one hundred years. If you saw the exhibit last year, come again and read the fine print!

From March 12, 1949 letter written by Bertha Lamson Smith of Franconia:

Thurs. night was the Grange—and Evelyn went with me. Quite a party. I got my Silver Star—25 year membership certificate—with all the proper ceremonies etc., as did five others! Then the auction sale of box-lunches went on. There were twenty beautifully decorated boxes—a real auctioneer—Mr. Clement to conduct the sale—but only eight poor men to bid on them! I felt sorry for them, but they did themselves proud, and some bought three—bringing in \$21.50—which they added to the money also about \$21—made at a Whist party previous night, and voted to give “the purse” - to Fire victims—Bobby Ball and wife! Grangers are GOOD NEIGHBORS—you know!



Mock Grange assembly room.

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POST OFFICE MURAL



When was the last time you looked up when entering the Franconia Post Office and saw the mural drawn by Herb Tulk on the lobby wall? Herb was an electrician by trade but also an artist who lived with his wife Gert on Wallace Hill Road from the mid-1940's to the mid-1960's.

“It represents the iron works built in 1811, the Pony Express, the mail being brought by buckboard and stage coach, and the first Post Office opened just prior to April 1, 1808. Gale River and Mt. Lafayette are also in the picture, as well as some of the early settlers' houses, and a picture of the Old Man postage stamp which was issued June 21, 1955 in commemoration of the Old Man of the Mountains' 150th birthday.” Quoted from Sarah N. Welch's *History of Franconia*, page. 71.



