

# Under the Hump

## SOCIETY BUSINESS

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- November 10th Meeting at CBMS at 6:30 not 7pm Linda Radtke performing
- Historical Society Calendars on sale at the next meeting.
- Renew your dues at the meeting.



### CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBER?



Last Issue  
Ralph Ainsworth

It gets harder and harder to get the newsletter together and out on time so here is the overdue copy of the summer newsletter. In the previous issue there was a newsletter challenge page so please take the time to do a little research and contribute to the newsletter. Just a few notes that can be written up into paragraphs and a couple



photos would be a greatly appreciated contribution.

A couple events have happened since the last news

letter. The Vermont in the Civil presentation took place at the Crossett Brook middle school on July 25th. The attendance was disappointingly low but those that did attend were quite pleased with what they saw. The Hemlocks set up their encampment and brought a cannon which was fired by several historical society members. The exhibits were exceptional and there was plenty of good food for all. Many thanks to all the members that pitched in to help out for the day.

The annual summer picnic was held at the South Duxbury church again this year and members were able to sample fine food

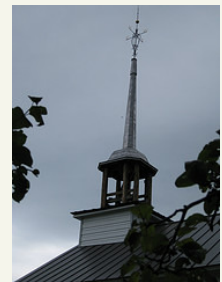
brought by other members as well as home made ice cream.

The next meeting being held at Crossett Brook Middle School on November 10th **will start at 6:30 instead of our**

**usual time of 7 p.m.** . Linda Radtke, a mezzo-soprano, accompanied by John Lincoln will perform courtesy of the Vermont Humanities Council. They will share songs that were common to the Civil War period.

The year is coming to an end so that means it is time to renew your historical society dues. Please bring your \$10 renewal fee to Mark at the meeting so we can save time and money on the renewal process.

We will be doing the Historical Society Calendars again this year for 2010 with the Waterbury Historical Society. They will be at the meeting on sale for \$10. They make an excellent holiday gift and the season is just around the corner.



## THE KENNEDY FAMILY

Anyone that has been a resident of Duxbury for any length of time is quite familiar with the Kennedy family and their long standing residence in the town. What is not as well known is the fact that the descendants of John Kennedy Sr. have been in the Bolton and Duxbury area since the 1700's. John Kennedy and his four sons Robert, David, Patrick and John, Jr. fought in the War of the Revolution. John Sr. was a quartermaster having charge of the weapons and the military stores. He served as a private in Captain Thomas Johnson's company with additional service under Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga and Seth Warner at Crown Point. John Sr. later died of a fever in camp and was buried wrapped in a blanket at Mt. Independence. Both he and John Jr. are registered with the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution

Descendent John Kennedy born in 1773 settled in Duxbury before 1800 and was deeded the farm now commonly known as the Kennedy place on the Bolton town line in 1801. He died in Duxbury in 1858. His son



CHARLES RANSOM KENNEDY  
JUST A FEW DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH

James was born in Duxbury in 1820 and later married Sophronia Palmer from Richmond. They resided and later died in the town of Duxbury. They had a son Charles Ransom Kennedy who was born about 1850 and resided at the

family farm. Another son George was also a long time Duxbury resident.



JANE PEARSON KENNEDY & CHARLES RANSOM KENNEDY

Charles R. married Jane Pearson and they went on to have three children – Howard, Edith and Charles Homer who was known as Homer. Jane originally came from Scotland through Ireland and then on to Canada where they settled when she was nine. They later came to Vermont. Jane's father was an alcoholic and he deserted his wife and eight children leaving her mother to raise her children by herself. With her home life less than ideal she married at the young age of fifteen.

Charles R. did some farming and worked at the lumber mill on the Ridley Brook not far from his home. Charles R. would often live away from the Duxbury area when he was working in the textile mills. He worked in the woolen mills in Winooski and elsewhere in the state. He would also travel when his expertise was requested at mills for him to come to show them the technique of a particular dying process.

To keep things going while Charles R. was away his wife Jane was a midwife and she also took care of young women who were handicapped by deafness. There were two or three young women who stayed with her and one named Muriel was a deaf mute who lived with her for years.

George Kennedy was also a Duxbury resident and lived on a portion of the family



## THE KENNEDY FAMILY

farm down the road from the original farm house. His farm house was consumed by fire and his daughter Ruby later had a small cabin on that property that is also no longer there. His great-niece Ruth later purchased this property and rejoined it with the original farm property. He married Ellen Morse and they had five daughters, Ruby, Maude, Stella, Pearl and Kathryn (Katie). George worked at the mill and was a carpenter. He occasionally would take off to search for bees nest and collect the honey.

None of the daughters married.

Pearl was stricken by polio and used crutches throughout her life. She went to Boston to work for a while but ended up coming home to live with Katie. She was enterprising and sold stamps by mail. Pearl would sit on her porch and teach her cousin Ruth about her stamps. The eldest, Ruby,



C. HOMER KENNEDY

was an excellent cook and worked in Burlington taking care of elderly people. In the summer she would come back and stay in Duxbury. She was the last surviving member of this branch of the family.

C. Homer Kennedy married Mary Leighton of Newbury 1912. He built a small home on the Duxbury road with the help of his Uncle George who was a carpenter. Later on they moved into the larger farm house with his mother when his sister Edith decided to move out and relocate to Mallets Bay. They lived in the larger house until it was consumed by fire and at that time they moved back

down the hill to the smaller house which was later lived in by Charlie Kennedy. Ruth built a second home next to her father's home. Both of those houses remain today near the Bolton town line.



CHARLES - C. HOMER - RUTH ON LAP - DOROTHY - MARY PEARSON KENNEDY - ROBERT

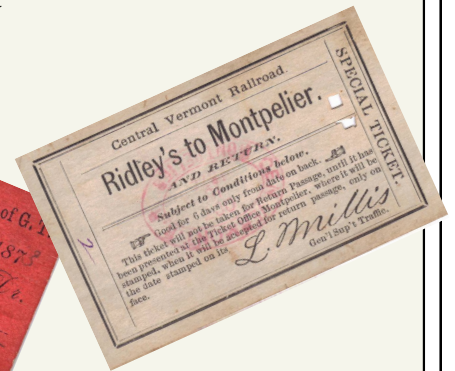


## THE KENNEDY FAMILY

April 30

Bro Chas

I will send the Hens + other stuff Saturday Monday on Burlington freight we have got the oats + grass seed all sowed + our Potato ground Ploughed + Harrowed. The old Rhod Plum tree was in Blossom yesterday we sowed your last years Potato Piece to oats + stocked it down Sam has picked stones most of the time we have got curtains Harry Morn



A LETTER FROM GEORGE TO HIS BROTHER CHARLES  
ALONG WITH THEIR TEMPERANCE CARDS  
AND A RAILROAD TICKET TO MONTPELIER

NOTICE THE NORTH DUXBURY POSTMARK ON THE  
ENVELOPES BELOW

+ wife are here we shall Plough our own ground next week The Lambs + sheep are all well + smart Munroe Lewis has got his Pension increased + \$2.85 Back pay two hundred + eighty five + Wesley sent him \$30 + he is having a good time he went by the other day with a Livery Stable team, he gets 6 pes month now Walt White has been planting his Potatoes this week I got your letter Wed night

Is J Kennedy





## THE KENNEDY FAMILY

Homer was a friendly man that had multiple jobs to support his family. He had sheep and four or five cows. He was a good farmer that took care of his land and believed in fertilizer. He would be seen in the area delivering the milk using his Model T Ford. When the winter came he frowned on the use of antifreeze so he would drain the radiator when he was done in the evening. In the morning he would fill it up with hot water and give it a crank and away he would go. He worked on the road crew and in the lumber business as well. At that time the town clerk would send in a list of names of potential jurors to be selected for jury duty. Since he was on the list he was always on jury duty.

They also supplemented their income with the proceeds from their large garden. Homer would sell yellow wax beans to the Demerit cannery and Mary would put up vast amounts of vegetables in ball jars and keep them in the cellar in rows. The Slayton kids on their summer trip to the farm would earn a penny a pound picking beans and take their hard earned money into Waterbury to buy comic books.

An extension of the house was built that was basically a large shed and half of it housed his grocery store. He had a letterhead that said *Fine Groceries*. Being a grocer was not a very successful endeavor. His first mistake was to issue credit to his neighbors and not have the heart to press forth with any collections. He also had four children that would help themselves to the inventory. Penny candy was the first item they looked for and Robert found out that he had gone too far when he helped himself to some tobacco to roll cigarettes. That indiscretion got him an introduction to a strap. Fred LeClair had a store a mile and a half up the road and that was the company store. If you worked for Fred you were expected to buy your groceries at his store. LeClair also owned a boarding house that accommodated a lot of the mill workers as well as some other small houses in the area that he rented out.



ABOVE - CHARLES R. IS MARKED WITH A X ABOVE HIS HEAD IN THE PHOTO OF THE MILL CREW

BELOW - HOWARD KENNEDY AND ALICE DAVIS KENNEDY



## THE KENNEDY FAMILY

The majority of the North Duxbury population was obligated to spend their money at LeClair's and they never made the mile trip down to Kennedy's for any purchases.

Life for Homer and his family was very similar to many families in the area. They were comfortable but didn't have the modern conveniences that we take for granted today. His son Charles hand dug a trench from a spring in the late 1930's providing the luxury of running water to the house. Prior to that water had to be carried in which was a job that was often done by the boys. Ruth remembers sneaking in the house when her clothes were exceptionally dirty so her mother wouldn't see. At that time clothes were washed in a washtub and it was a labor intensive process that her mother knew would be more labor intensive when she saw Ruth after an outing catching turtles with her brothers.

The night of the 1927 flood Mary called her sister-in-law Alice to see if the children could spend the night at their home since the flood waters were rising and closed the road home. Ruth was 7 and Charles 10. Mary was home alone as her mother-in-law had been called away on midwife duties. Homer was down state in matters of the heart trying to get his Aunt to reunite with his Uncle. Dorothy was in Waterbury in high school and worked for the Naylor's on Main Street. Robert was at Mallet's Bay with his Aunt Edith. During the night they heard the Bolton dam go out with what sounded like an explosion. The next day Mary walked through the woods to retrieve her children as the water filled the low lying road.

Following Sunday afternoon dinners Mary would gather her kids, and sometimes Homer and they would walk around the property and look at the plants that the farm had to offer. It was a custom that started in her family that she continued with her children. She was an excellent gardener and enjoyed her plants. The wildflower contest at Duxbury School was won by the one that brought in the most varieties of wildflowers. The Kennedy kids won the contest and the other contestants were sure that Mary's love of plants had given her children the upper edge.



TOP - HOWARD AND HIS SISTER EDITH  
BELOW RIGHT

ERNEST, EDITH & CHARLES SMITH  
BELOW LEFT

MATILDA THOMPSON PEARSON  
MOTHER OF MARY PEARSON KENNEDY





## THE KENNEDY FAMILY

Ruth recalls that they were not allowed to play with toys on Sunday and the playing of cards was considered a mortal sin by her grandmother Kennedy. Her grandmother was further upset when her own brother came for a visit bringing cards and taught the children how to play.

Homer and Mary had four children. They were all blessed with brains and good looks and Dorothy was no exception. She was very tall and pretty with striking black hair. As the oldest child born in 1913 she went to college at UVM. In addition to being salutatorian of her class she was the editor of a UVM magazine and worked in UVM press office sending out news bulletins. She later married Ronald Slayton from Barre and had three children – Thomas, Peter and Gale. The Slaytons resided in Knoxville, Tennessee and they would drive up and spend the summers on the Kennedy farm. During their visits to Vermont they would also visit Homer's sister Edith Smith on Mallet's Bay.

Homer a staunch conservative republican, thought Franklin Roosevelt was elected to punish man for all

their sins, and Ron Slayton a democrat would have spirited discussions. Ron said "Damn it Homer, Vermont has to have some progress." Homer replied "You know Ron it is awfully hard to keep up with progress."

Dorothy died accidentally in 1957 in an electrical storm.

She touched a washing machine when her feet touched water on the floor at the same time. After her death her

family moved back from TN to the Kennedy farm and stayed there for a short while until Ron found a job and home in Vermont and finalized his affairs in TN. All three children remained in Vermont with Gale residing in the Slayton home in Berlin. Tom spent many years as a legislative reporter and editor for area newspapers. He then went on to be the editor of Vermont Life.



ALICE D. KENNEDY AND  
HER DAUGHTER IRENE

Born in 1914 Robert was a bright child that could create stories all throughout the day drawing from his vivid imagination. At the age of 11 he developed epilepsy and was prone to have seizures. His mother took him to numerous doctors and chiropractors searching for a cure. It was suggested that he have a special diet and not have fried doughnuts as fried food might aggravate his condition. She wrote to the Midwest and other regions of the country seeking a cure. He wasn't able to attend high school or go into the woods alone for fear a being alone when he had a seizure. When he was 17 in 1932 he developed cerebral meningitis and died. It devastated the family and was almost more that his father could bear. He had lost his mother and oldest son along with his home to a house fire all within three years. Homer would sit by the stove and just sit for hours for many months. He eventually came out of his depression and resumed his routine.

Charlie Kennedy born in 1917 was known around town as a kind soul with the piercing blue eyes. He was a hard worker and an excellent woodsman. He like his father had numerous jobs and took care of the land that provided for him. Many hours were spent trapping, hunting and fishing. One day fishing on a brook near the Pape place near what is now Marshall Road he



EDITH KENNEDY WITH MURIEL WHO WAS A  
DEAF MUTE BOARDER THAT STAYED WITH  
HER MOTHER



## KENNEDY NEWS CLIPPINGS

## Kennedy Is Candidate For Duxbury Rep.

DUXBURY — Homer Kennedy has announced he is a candidate for town representative. He has lived on his farm since the age of eight; the same place his great-grandfather, John Kennedy settled a little before 1800.

Kennedy has held many offices. He was town lister for many years, selectman 1920 and 1921, tax collector in 1928, auditor for several years, justice of the peace for nearly 10 years, moderator for 15 years, and representative four times.

He was Town Representative in 1921 serving on the taxation committee, in 1943 and again in 1951 he served on the social security committee, and in 1961 he served on the municipal corporation committee.

He has served on jury duty many times, the first time in 1910.

clipping date:  
May 31, 1962

## C.H. Kennedy Sr., Duxbury Official, Is Dead at Age 86

DUXBURY — C. Homer Kennedy Sr., 86, who served several terms in the Vermont Legislature as Duxbury representative, died Tuesday morning in a Waterbury nursing home following a lingering illness.

He was a member of the legislature in 1921, 1943, 1951 and 1961.

He also held several town offices, including moderator, justice of the peace, lister, auditor and selectman.

Mr. Kennedy married Mary F. Leighton, who died in 1959.

He was born in Duxbury Oct. 23, 1885, the son of Charles and Jane (Pearson) Kennedy.

He leaves a daughter, Mrs. Ruth Hartshorn of New York City; a son, Charles of North Duxbury; a sister, Mrs. Ernest (Edith) Smith of Colchester; five grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held Friday at 1 p.m. at the Perkins-Parker Funeral Chapel. The Rev. Robert Farmer will officiate. Entombment will be in Hope Cemetery vault. Friends may call at the funeral chapel Thursday from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m.

clipping Date  
Jan. 12, 1972

Alice D. Kennedy  
DUXBURY — Alice D. Kennedy, 91, long-time resident here, died early Thursday at the Central Vermont Hospital, Berlin, after a short illness.

Mrs. Kennedy had lived her entire life in North Duxbury on the family homestead, except for the last six years, which she spent with her daughter, Mrs. Irene Chapman, of North Duxbury.

She was born in North Duxbury, Dec. 8, 1883, daughter of Fred and Carrie (Carleton) Davis.

She was married to Howard Kennedy who died several years ago.

Survivors include her daughter; one grandson Donald Chapman, of North Duxbury; one brother, Roy Davis of Jonesville, and several cousins.

Funeral services will be held Saturday at 2 p.m. at the Perkins-Parker Funeral Chapel, Waterbury. The Rev. John Kirk will officiate.

Friends may call at the funeral chapel Friday from 2-4 and 7-9 p.m.

3-20-75

Homer Kennedy missed town meeting day, ill health causing his absence. A native of Duxbury and residing on the farm of his ancestors who first settled a little before 1800 on the land in North Duxbury where his farm stands, he has missed but one previous Town Meeting since he was old enough to vote. He has served the town in several of its offices and is still a justice of the peace. Too, when each town had its representative Mr. Kennedy served in that capacity.

Now over 80 years of age, he lives with his son, Charles, in the last house in North Duxbury before the Bolton line.

### Mrs. Homer Kennedy

DUXBURY — Mrs. Mary Leighton Kennedy, wife of Homer Kennedy, died Tuesday morning at the Heaton Hospital in Montpelier after a short illness. She was born in Newbury, Feb. 13, 1890, the daughter of Franklin P. Leighton and Mary Elizabeth Burroughs.

A graduate of Johnson's Normal School, she taught in Duxbury previous to her marriage. For many years she was town correspond-

ent for the Burlington Free Press.

Survivors include her husband; one son, Homer Charles Kennedy Jr. of Duxbury, one daughter, Mrs. Barker (Ruth) Hartshorn of Hollis, Long Island, N.Y.; two brothers, George B. Leighton of Newington, Conn.; and Milo Leighton of Newbury; two sisters, Miss Margaret Leighton of Newbury and Miss Martha Leighton of Ithaca, N.Y.; five grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

The body will be at Perkins Funeral Chapel where friends may call Wednesday from 2-4 and 7-9.

Funeral services will be held from the chapel Thursday afternoon at 2. Burial will be made in the family lot in Hope Cemetery.

Date of Clipping -  
Oct. 27, 1959

### Homer Kennedy Funeral

WATERBURY — Funeral services were held for Homer Kennedy Friday at 1 p.m. in the Perkins Parker Funeral Chapel. The Rev. Robert Farmer officiated.

Entombment was in the Hope Cemetery vault pending burial in that cemetery.

1-18-72

### WATERBURY

KENNEDY, Miss Catherine, 67, died from a lingering illness Saturday in Stoneham, Mass.

She was born in Colchester, Aug. 21, 1892, the daughter of George and Ellen (Morse) Kennedy.

She leaves a sister Miss Ruby Kennedy of Burlington; and two cousins, Homer Kennedy of North Duxbury and Mrs. Edith Smith of Colchester.

The body will arrive in Waterbury Monday. Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Perkins Funeral Chapel, the Rev. C. Arthur Hazen officiating. The body will be placed in Hope Vault with burial in Hope Cemetery in the spring.

### MISS MARY KENNEDY

DUXBURY — Miss Mary Ruby Kennedy, 87, longtime resident of Duxbury, died Tuesday in a Burlington hospital after a long illness.

She was born May 14, 1884, in Duxbury, daughter of George and Ellen (Morse) Kennedy. Miss Kennedy was employed in several communities as a cook.

Funeral will be held Thursday at 2 p.m. from the Perkins-Parker Funeral Home, Waterbury. Interment will be in Hope Cemetery, Waterbury. There are no calling hours.

10-27-71

NEWS CLIPPINGS FROM THE ALICE  
DELONG FILES



## THE KENNEDY FAMILY

caught a nice string of fish. An admiring bear saw his catch and Charlie decided that he would relinquish the fish and avoid a confrontation.

The neighbors would hire Charlie for numerous jobs including sugaring and cutting wood. At that time the men would get gravel out of the river for the Duxbury roads. Crews of four or five would shovel the gravel out of the river on to the wagons for the town. He worked on the road crew and also went to Hartford to work on their road crew. When he got there they told him to slow down because he was making them look bad.



EDITH AND ERNEST SMITH WITH ALICE AND HOWARD KENNEDY

Charlie drove a car once around a

field and told Ralph Davis that he never drove it again. He would often be seen getting a ride to town with Healy May. In his later years it was a regular Friday sight to see them make a trip into town to get his groceries.

Ruth spent a lot of time enjoying the woods of Duxbury with her brothers on adventures. Although she lived in NYC for many years she built a house next to the home she grew up in and ultimately relocated back to Duxbury to enjoy her woods. Although she was Pro Merito in high school her father called her the dumb one in the Kennedy household of extremely bright students. During the winter she didn't go to school a mile and half away. Her mother Mary was a teacher so she home schooled her children during the snow season which enabled Ruth to

complete four years of education in two. She later went to NYU to be tested and found that she was in the top one percent of the population of IQ. Ruth didn't miss out on the Kennedy good looks either which earned her the distinction of becoming the first Miss Vermont.

While in NYC she met Barker Tilton Hartshorn known as Bo. She was trying to catch his eye and wasn't successful even when she was all decked out for an evening at the Stork Club. Later on she met him at a ceramics shop where she was working and as they say the rest is history. He was an editor for Time magazine and she

was an antiques dealer. They had two sons Brian and Kevan. Their son Brian died young from a rare disease and her son Kevan is a very successful doctor in Boston.

Charles R. and Mary had one daughter Edith. She married Ernest Smith and they lived with her mother for some time and then relocated to a home on Mallet's Bay. It was a tiny

farm house on the brook with a summer kitchen and roofed porch. Ernie grew

vegetables and gladiolus that he sold on a little table that sat out on Mallets Bay road. The Clavelle family had the abutting property that was divided by a brook. The families would occasionally play games by change the course of the brook to enhance the amount of property on their side of the "property line". Along with their son Charlie they would host many family gatherings on the shores of the bay. At the Smith home they would fire up the wood stove in the summer kitchen in the shed attached to the house and boil up big pots of water with corn in the early 50's which was always a treat. At that time the bay was crystal clear and the kids going out in the row boat would get a good view through the water of the clams on the bottom .

## THE KENNEDY FAMILY

Howard along with his brother Homer was a respected figure in the North Duxbury community even with his colorful vocabulary that can't be printed here. He and his wife Alice Davis lived near the intersection of the Duxbury Road and the Camels Hump road in the home that was later occupied by their only child Irene Chapman.

Like many of his era he had numerous jobs to make a living. Howard worked at Elliot's mill and was a substitute mail carrier. He also served as a Legislator and was overseer of the poor. The list of jurors from the town clerk also included his name so he sat on many juries. Howard was often seen providing rides for people into town and providing services and getting groceries for Professor Monroe.

Alice was Fred and Carrie Davis's daughter. She took in boarders that were working on the dam and railroad as well as school teachers including Helen Burbank Davis. Alice was like many women of her era supporting the household with many jobs and keeping a neat and tidy house. She was known as a great cook with exceptional sugar cookies.

Their daughter Irene married Irving Chapman and they had one son Donald. She remained in the area until her death.

## BEARS.

Although hundreds of bears have been killed in Bolton, and there are many bear stories connected with its history, yet, if we confine ourselves to the strict truth, there is no particular instance which will compare with some stories related for other towns, hence it will suffice us to say, that the bears were killed with clubs, guns, dogs; caught in box traps, dead falls, and steel traps; that the bears killed sheep according to their nature whenever they could catch them, and frightened a great many people whom they never hurt; broke into corn-fields, eat corn in the night, and climbed apple trees and stole apples. John Kennedy's oldest son, whose name was John, and who died in Duxbury, 1858, in his 86th year, had killed more bears than he was years old. Elijah Hinkson, who died in Bolton in December, 1860, in the 72d year of his age, Hon. S. B. Kennedy now living in Bolton in the 73d year of his age, Seth Stockwell and Isaiah Preston, were the most famous of the bear killers. No doubt the bears rejoice in their death or old age.



IRENE KENNEDY - BACK DOROTHY - FRONT RUTH - CHARLES BACK - CHARLES SMITH IN FRONT WITH PUDDER THE DOG ON MALLETS BAY ABOUT 1934



## MISS VERMONT 1938

Although she never planned on being the first Miss Vermont Ruth did just that. She had gone to Burlington to have her tonsils out and was recuperating at her Aunt's apartment in Burlington. Her Aunt Martha was an asso-

her sister's closet yielded a black and silver evening gown that did the trick.

She went to tell her Aunt who lived a few blocks away, with her bridge club in full attendance, that she had entered the contest. With true Vermont reserve they just looked up at her and went on with the card game at hand. She walked back to her sister's apartment and got dressed for the big event and heading over to the auditorium and was thankful that the 1938 competition did not have a bathing suit event. They had to march across the stage and then off to the back room to be measured in all directions. That portion felt more like an entry in the livestock event at the fair than a beauty pageant. Back to the stage to parade again and after a short discussion she was announced as the very first Miss Vermont.

When the news hit north Duxbury it was by way of a Burlington Free Press reporter that arrived at her Aunt Alice's house first. Alice then went to the old walled telephone and rang it three times to summon Ruth's mother Mary to tell her what her daughter had done. When Mary inquired which daughter she exclaimed "Ruth - She is Miss Vermont". Mother went looking for Dad to tell him the news. When the newspaper arrived and they found out that she would be going to Hollywood for three days of screen testing they got in touch with Aunt Martha (Mary's sister). They got in the old Ford and went Burlington and Aunt Martha was given the job of persuading Ruth not to go Hollywood. If she would instead accept the prize money of \$250 and stay closer to home so they could keep a more watchful eye she was given a promise for a trip to NYC with her Aunt. Martha and another professor took her to NYC for her trip. After her trip she came back to Burlington and began work in an insurance office.



RUTH KENNEDY HARTSHORN  
MISS VERMONT 1938  
RUNNER UP IN FRONT ON LEFT

ciate head of the extension service as well as a professor. Her Aunt had gone to work so Ruth took a walk up Church Street and ran into a boy from high school. They continued their walk and he saw a poster in a store window announcing the Miss Vermont contest. He encouraged her to enter so they went into the store to collect more details on the contest which turned out to be that evening. They were also told that people were already setting up for the big dance at the Memorial Auditorium. It was meant to attract people to the dance. The Lucky Milander band from Harlem was to play that evening. When they got to the auditorium they were told that the contestants were supposed to sell \$50 worth of dance tickets. They didn't have the money or the time to sell the ticket but the organizers decided that she should enter the contest regardless. They went to her sister's apartment and her brother-in-law Ronald Slayton who was an artist working for WUPA was home. Ronald was delighted to hear that she had entered and enjoyed out of the ordinary pursuits. He declared himself her director and had her practice walking in the apartment. She didn't have the clothes for the contest but a trip through



## NORTH DUXBURY FRIEND

For me, Charles (Charlie) Kennedy was one of those once-in-a-lifetime kind of fellows that you meet during your earthly journey. He and I crossed paths at infrequent intervals from the days of my early youth in the 1940's and 50's until the last days of his life. Charlie knew me in those early days only as the son of Healy and Helene Grace up on Crossett Hill and I knew him only as one member of the Homer and Mary Kennedy family from North Duxbury. We would most certainly not have been even that familiar with each other except for the fact that Charlie cut pulp on occasion for my father up on our Crossett Hill farm and other woodlots on the rugged slopes of that noble hill. Our universe was so small during those days that I'm quite sure I did not know another person from North Duxbury until the Crossett Hill one room school closed and I started attending the Duxbury Corner School in 1950.

Once I met Charlie, he made an indelible impression on me. I remember that unique look in his eyes when he made eye contact with me. His eyes seemed to grow larger in size, brighter in light, his eyebrows would arch, and he'd speak with a real passion for the subject when we entered into conversation. He was well-read and articulate, an obviously bright man, and although he was passionate about the subject matter, he was not in any way angry or confrontational. I loved talking to him. He not only had a good tale to tell and told it well, but he got that look in his eye that is usually limited to a young school kid recalling some wonderful event from his/her day's activities. Charlie was, as I call it in my own peculiar vernacular, a piece of work.

A bit later on in life, when Charlie and I knew each other better and traded stories, he never failed to mention those past days of cutting pulp for my Dad up on Crossett Hill. He'd get that familiar sparkle in his eye and recall that he would meet Dad at the Duxbury Corner School early in the morning in the 1940's and they would walk together up the hills to the woodlots on Crossett Hill. Neither one of them had a car at the time. Keep in mind that our farm was at the very top of Crossett Hill, the last farm before the road bends and heads back down the hill to Route 100. Dad graduated to a car soon thereafter; I don't think Charlie ever owned or even drove a car in his lifetime. At least, I never knew

him to own or drive one. Charlie obviously took pride in that hardy endeavor - and I say he had good reason to. He'd tell me about cutting pulp - mostly hemlock, he insisted, as bulky a tree and as labor intensive as it gets in the pulp cutting business - with crosscut and bow saws. Anyone who has ever wrestled his/her way through a big, burly hemlock, felling it, limbing it, sometimes peeling it, cutting it into four-foot sections, and stacking it in rows for measurement and loading on a truck knows that Charlie was taking very justified pride in that task. I've been on one end of a crosscut saw a few times in my youth and twisted and pried a spud to strip the bark from a hemlock as well, not very willingly I must admit. It's no fun. As I've heard more than once from some old Vermonter, "It ain't no job for young boys in short pants."

A few years later when I was attending Waterbury High School, I liked to stop in at the pool room on Bank Hill, much to my Mom's displeasure, on my way home from basketball or baseball practice or on a Saturday afternoon or evening. The pool room was a dark, dank, smoke-clogged, hole-in-the-wall joint; a filthy place I think is an apt description. And I loved going in there. It had a colorful cast of characters who populated the place - a fellow could tell a good tale about the steady customers of that sordid place, but that's for another time... Charlie was a mainstay. He was a decent pool player, although certainly not one of the elite players, but he was good enough to be a player at the lead table, where the more serious money games took place, unless there were some real 'ringers' in the house. Charlie was the guy who captured my attention. He had the most unorthodox way of addressing and striking a cue ball you could possibly imagine. It always seemed to me he looked like a man imitating a pretzel; his long, thin, angular body twisted and contorted in strange postures and angles, fingers curled and twisted around the tip of the cue, those piercing eyes trained on the ball. It was a priceless scene. I silently cheered for my pal Charlie. And I mean silently in a very literal sense of the word. It was absolutely taboo for any of the young squirts sitting or perching in attendance to disturb the players in any way. Such behavior would get you thrown out of the place, and when I say thrown out I mean that literally. One of the fascinations with the joint was, I



## NORTH DUXBURY FRIEND

must admit, the knowledge that a good fight might break out at any time. Charlie was not the fighting kind of man, though. He was the consummate sportsman in that miserable den of inequity. He won a few games with dignity and no braggadocio, and he lost with no sour grapes or complaints.

Like many of the members of that hole-in-the-wall gang, Charlie would beat a path to the comfort room on a regular basis. What a filthy, wretched hole that was! A trip to our three-holer on Crossett Hill was a pleasant experience in comparison. But the owner/manager of the place did not have a license for consumption of spirits, so those players in need of courage out of a brown bottle were forced to make a trip to this sordid setting to wet their whistles and sharpen the course of their cues. Looking back at it now, it must have taken some awfully good booze to offset the ambiance of that nasty place.

There were occasions when Charlie made too many trips to the pool hall comfort station or stayed a bit too long at the bar upstairs after the pool game dried up. His home in North Duxbury must have been five miles or so from the pool hall and Charlie did not have a car. When he could not hitch a ride with someone heading that way, he walked home. I recall spotting Charlie a couple times heading down Winooski Street in Waterbury, obviously on his way home after one of those occasions when he'd made more than the optimum trips to the comfort room or upstairs bar. Charlie was definitely not taking the straight-ahead approach to the journey home. I'd look at Charlie and think to myself that it was a good thing that there were railings on the bridge across the Winooski. He didn't look like a good candidate to stay between the lines on the bridge and an even worse candidate to swim across the river. But somehow he made it home.

After high school and college, I left the Waterbury/Duxbury area for twenty years and lost touch with Charlie and most of my other friends and acquaintances from my home towns. But when I returned to the area in the 1980's, I would renew my casual friendship with Charlie. I started helping Jim Harvey with his harness racing horses at his farm on the North Duxbury Road and Charlie and his friend, Healy May, would stop on occasion on their way to or from Waterbury. Healy

was a loyal friend and neighbor of Charlie. They drove to Waterbury in Healy's pickup every Friday to pick up groceries and other provisions. One of their stops was always Maxie Irish's Ideal Market. Healy and Charlie were typical old Duxbury boys; they wouldn't think of going anywhere else except Maxie's for their meat supplies - and Healy's 40-oz Old Mills. Charlie had quit drinking any alcohol by this time in his life, but Healy said that he'd just slowed down to a very moderate consumption of the stuff. Two or three beers only, Healy told me with a twinkle in his eye, nodding his head to the back of his pickup. I noted he was talking about 40-oz jobs and we all got a good chuckle out of that line.

It always made me feel good to see the special bond between these two aging Vermonters. They were both good, decent men and true friends. Healy was like a brother to Charlie, it seemed to me. It was a great sight seeing them coming up that country road, bouncing along in Healy's old pickup, a smile on their faces when they spotted Jim down at his horse barn, swapping local news and family goings-on, grouching about politics, rehashing old tales and making the best out of what was really a pretty bare-bones existence.

Jim and I visited Charlie a couple times in the last year or so of his life when his health was in obvious decline. He was always pleased to see us, bouncing around in almost childlike excitement, animated as ever, and comfortable in his home. His family was obviously making it possible for Charlie to live out his final days in comfort and security. He's gone now and so is his buddy, Healy. I miss them both. There's a shortage of these old, traditional Vermonters these days, I say. They're a vanishing breed ... but time does not stand still.

Many thank to Steve Grace for his contribution



## KENNEDY FARM

Summers, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Kennedy farm in North Duxbury seemed like about the best place in the world to a young boy. At that time, the little yellow farmhouse was uninsulated and had neither electricity nor indoor plumbing, so it was undoubtedly less appealing to the adults who had to get through the winters there.

But to the young boy I was then, the farm was a summer-long adventure. It had a brook to splash in, open fields to run in, a red barn filled with hay to jump in, and two dogs to play with. It also had big, slightly scary farm animals – two or three milk cows in the back of the barn and Old Joe, the aging Belgian draft horse. We could watch them and gingerly pet them, wonder at them and feed them swatches of hay..

And it had Homer, Charles and Mary Kennedy – they were “grandma” and “grampa” and

“Uncle Chinkie” to me – strong, almost mythic country people very unlike the suburbanized adult neighbors we had near our year-round home in Knoxville, Tennessee. That was where my Dad worked, teaching arts and crafts at the University of Tennessee. His job meant that he often had to drive up into the foothills of the Smoky Mountains searching out mountain craftspeople. And the further we got into the hills and coves of the Smokies, the more it seemed to me like Vermont.

Like Vermont, life was simpler (some would say “poorer”, but it didn’t seem poor at all to me) in the mountains. Hard work, not much money, but simple, genuine pleasures: cookouts with home-made ice cream and corn on the cob, places where little boys could run and hide and play Army or pirates or whatever without interference, people who spoke simply and directly and knew how to work

hard and entertain themselves without shopping or television. People like my grandparents.

Homer Kennedy must have been in his late 60s by the time I first remember him. He was of average height and had a rugged build, the result of a lifetime of farm work. He was bald and sported a bristly mustache, but what most people remember about him were his piercing blue eyes, eyes that snapped with intensity when he was angry and twinkled gaily when he was amused – as he often was with his two busy, rambunctious grandsons.



HOMER AND MARY WITH DAUGHTER DOROTHY  
AND HER SONS PETER AND THOMAS SLAYTON

Homer wore a suit and tie when he represented Duxbury in the Legislature, but around the farm, he wore his work clothes – an old pair of gray whipcord pants held in place by suspenders and a nondescript flannel shirt. His white chest hairs curled out of the open neck of that shirt, and I remember that he often smelled of

woodsmoke – because the little Duxbury farmhouse was heated entirely by wood stoves and the kitchen range was wood-fired too.

Keith Wallace remembered my grandfather and summed up Grampa’s approach to life in one sentence: “He was a real old Vermonter,” said Keith, “lived not so much on income as on lack of expense!”

Mary Kennedy was a firm and constant presence around the little yellow farmhouse. She wore rimless glasses and though she was unfailingly kind to us junior members, she seldom smiled. I think the one relief from her life of nearly constant work was her gardening. She was said to have a “green thumb” (which I asked once to see!) and she had built and kept for years a quietly gor-



## KENNEDY FARM

geous rock garden in the farmhouse's front yard. Once she brought a slender butternut sapling down from the edge of the pasture and planted it near the farmhouse's back driveway and porch. It grew into a 25-foot tall tree that kept the Kennedys permanently in butternuts – butternuts that would be seasoned and dried over the fall and laboriously cracked with a hammer on long winter evenings (if you've ever tried to crack butternuts you'll know that "laboriously" doesn't begin to describe the tedious process.)

Charles Kennedy was the youngest son, the only surviving son, and the only Kennedy child who stayed and grew up on the farm. He was genial, kind, unassuming, quite shy around strangers and, as a young man, strikingly handsome, with his high cheekbones, tanned skin and shock of curly black hair. He had stayed on the farm and by the time I was old enough to remember him, was probably most of the farm's muscle – though Grampa kept working until late into his 70s.

Every year, when I was a boy, we would drive up from East Tennessee to spend the summer in Duxbury at the Kennedy Farm. Knoxville was stifling in the summer – sleep in those pre-air conditioning Julys was just about impossible, and Vermont by comparison was cool and crisp. In the rattletrap old cars preferred by my father, Ronald Slayton, it took us the better part of a week to make the 1,500-mile trip. We had no money, so we camped and stayed overnight with friends and relatives along the way.

The last leg of the journey was the day-long trip from New York City (where we stayed with my aunt, Ruth Kennedy

Hartshorn, and her family) to the farm. It normally took us all day and into the night. We would arrive well after dark, my brother and I dozing in the car's back seat, or watching drowsily as the canopy of trees barreled over us, dimly lit by the headlights of the family jalopy as the miles of bad road rolled by. Finally, we would turn off the dirt road onto the little farmhouse's grassy driveway, stumble half-awake into the warmth of the kitchen and be handed a kerosene lamp with a glass chimney that

would light our way to the bedroom upstairs where we would sleep on what may have been the last cornshuck mattress in New England.

One of my minor bedtime rituals was looking out the window of that second-story bedroom westward, toward the dark bulk of Stimson Mountain. There was an aircraft beacon on the top of the mountain, and I could see its pinpoint flash of red...white...red...white...piercing the cool summer night. Just outside the window there was a gnarled sour-apple tree, a raspberry patch, and beyond a weedy ravine with a brook, none of which I could see. The murmuring night was dark in an absolute way I hadn't experienced in streetlit East Tennessee.



ALICE & HOWARD KENNEDY  
AND EDITH KENNEDY SMITH

Before committing myself to the cornshuck mattress and sleep, I would stand there for a few minutes, watching the intermittent flashing of the tiny light in the huge night, absorbing the depth of the darkened pastures and woods all around the isolated farmhouse. And I would feel on the edge of great adventures, about as far away from anywhere familiar as I could possibly be.

Many thanks to Tom Slayton for his contribution

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If you have any comments or contributions for the newsletter we would love to hear from you.

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**DON'T FORGET THE NEXT MEETING NOVEMBER 10TH**  
**CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL - 6:30PM**

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