

Orleans County Historical

Association

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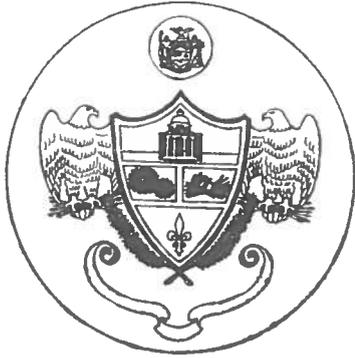
EAGLE HARBOR

Emily Hale, Barnum boys, Robert

Draper

Ridge Road

1889-



Orleans County Historical Association

INTERVIEW

Mr. J. Howard Pratt
Ridge Road
Gaines, New York

SUBJECT: A visit as a student to the COBELESTONE SCHOOLHOUSE
at Childs, New York. A one room schoolhouse.

Interviewed by:
Mrs. Mary Shuler
February 6, 1977





Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

J. Howard Pratt

Signed

Feb. 6, 1977

Date

Understood and agreed to:

Mary M. Shuler

INTERVIEWER

Feb. 6, 1977

Date

INTERVIEW OF MARY SCHULER

WITH J. HOWARD PRATT

TOPIC--COBBLESTONE SCHOOL

february 6, 1977, TAPE RECORDING NO. 1

Speaking is Mary Schuler, member and director of the association, a resident of Gains for twenty years. I am conversing with J. Howard Pratt, residing in the town of Gains for about eighty years. Mr. Pratt has been town historian for sixteen years.

As a youngster, he attended District No. 3 country school and graduated from Albion High School in 1911. In the fall of the year, he taught in Richard's Corners for \$11 per week. Moving then to Barre and other ungraded country schools.

During the war he took the position of 4-H county agent. He then retired to farming at 12883 Ridge Road. The Cobblestone Society was formed and obtained ownership of the cobblestone school at Childs. Mr. Pratt was asked to take charge of this school.

Miss Schuler: Mr. Pratt, how did you develop this idle school into a real living school?

Mr. Pratt: In taking charge, I gathered books, maps, desks, any old thing which pertained to the old school of about 1900 and fitted out the school as I remember the schools of my childhood days. Then out-fitted as it was, I wished children to come and see the school museum.

I invited to come and see the school, one fourth grade of forty, no, thirty children from the fourth grade in Albion. They came and enjoyed a good time, and I was off to a good start. Without any invitations sent out, the next year we had four hundred children of about the fourth and fifth grades, brought there by bus for one whole day's school work.

Now I'm going to tell you how I received the children coming to the school. They come by bus, and usually, now days about fifty or sixty with two teachers and two grades. I meet them as they step off the bus and say, "Good morning children, I am glad you brought a good day." Now, as we were having it in May and early June, the days would be good; it is much different from the day we are recording this, we are going through January and February with zero weather and bad storms. But in those old days, had we had a storm like this, I remember that only two or three days we ever had to quit school. I and my sister would climb over the snow banks to Gains, where the old school was about half a mile away and we did not stop for any bad weather, except very bad days, one or two at a time; other times the school ran continuously.

"You children have a good day, and you have come up here to be outside of the school and I will tell you just a little bit about the school before we enter.

"This old school was built in 1849 and was used for 101 years before it closed and the children were picked up by bus and taken to Albion. It is now about 127 years old.

"I am going to tell you a little bit about the Cobblestone, the school, and how it was built. Some, ah, ten or twelve thousand years ago, the old lake that you see down by Oak Orchard and Lakeside, was much larger than it is now. It really came up to this road; and as it is washing the stones clean down there, in those olden days, some ten thousand years ago, it was doing the same thing up here at that time. It washed the stones, this being the lake shore, ah, it washed the stones and left them here, and when the lake withdrew and went down to its present site, we have a ridge road and we have banks of water washed stones and sand and gravel very clean. And when white man come to this county, about, ah, a little less than 200 years ago, he found many stones. He didn't know what to do with them, so he picked them up and put them in piles, and then he had more stones than he knew what to do with. So some times he built his houses out of that stone. The outside is the cobblestone that you see, but that is only the veneer; but inside there's stones as big as you boys' and girls' head in there, a solid stone wall. This on the outside of the Cobblestone school are stones. They took a little more pains in building as it went on. First he did not keep the rows straight. There are little lines in between the rows that are not pronounced; but in later years, about fifteen or twenty years, he used a little more time and made that straight line that separate the stones. The stones were also gathered and sorted and put in one size. The smaller ones on the front, the next larger size on the sides, and the third larger size placed in the back of the buildings.

"Now we can enter into the entry, the entry room, and here you'll find hooks where you can hang your hats and leave your lunch out here, unless it is very cold. We also have some of the old play things, which I and every other child, in those olden days, used to play with. In the winter we had the skates, here's a pair that's 135 years old, and here's a pair that is about seventy-five or a hundred. Here's the girls' skates over here with straps to hold them on, and here's the later skates, or the skates of the present time, where the shoe is fastened permanently to the skate; otherwise we had our own shoes on and our skates were strapped and fastened to the shoes that we wore. We also have here a goose-neck sled, which was in popular use at that time. My sister had one and I used to draw her to school and she used to draw me, and we used to slide down that hill on the old goose-neck sled.

"Now I'm going to open the door, and you can go inside and take any seat you want, and now we will go inside. When the children were about all seated, I didn't wait for them to play around, I took the school bell and started ringing it. They would all sit down quickly and look up to see, and when I got their attention I started the story of the school.

"I grew up and went to one of these old schools for eight or nine years, and then I went on to another school; but if you were living around here for a mile and a half to the east or a mile and a half to the west, or a mile and a half to the north or south, each of you every day would walk to school and bring your dinner pail because we

had no cafeteria in rural schools.

We'd come to school from the time we started school, five or six years old, until we got through the eighth grade or until we were 16 years of age. Now, it is up to you to come to school, walk to school, no buses, everyday that the school was in session, no matter if it rained or if it snowed or storm or whatever. That was part of your daily life.

'Now I'm going to tell you just a little bit about the description of the things on the wall. I'm going to start up here and tell you that the only lighting we had was these oil lamps put up in brackets around the room here. We did not have them lit very much; they were more for any entertainment or any gathering here at night. They do not reflect enough light out into the room so it benefited the children very much. But, here they are, and also you'll find up in the ceiling if you look up here, ah, four hooks there. Now children ask me, 'What are those hooks for?'. Well, those hooks are put there, ah, so if they do have a gathering here at night, the men wish to bring lanterns and when they got there, they hang those up on the hooks; and that was for illumination for the room. Now one thing that you will notice is different than any school you have gone to now, has been changed some twenty-five years ago, in the old country school you only had one teacher, one room, one teacher, and she taught the first grade, and when you completed the first grade you come back the second year and find the same teacher, and she would teach you the second grade and the first grade, if that should be she would teach you in the second

grade, and so on. Each year through you would come back to the same school and you would probably find the same teacher for three years, then a change would be, but the new teacher would still teach all the grades. She would teach the first grade, the second grade, the third grade, the fourth grade, the fifth grade, the sixth grade, the seventh grade, and the eighth grade, and get them ready for the regents if they wanted to take the examination. Now, you wonder how, and your teachers, wonder how one teacher can teach eight grades, well it's part of our work in school. We only had about 35 classes everyday and those classes from necessity had to be very short, so we were cramped at times. So we had to have our lessons in pretty good shape, recite fast and then go back to your seat and go to studying.

Now the question that you will always ask me is the length of the school day? We got to school and school started at 9:00 a.m. in the morning. It lasted until 12:00 with a break of 15 minutes called recess, which I will tell you about later. Then at 12:00 you were free for one hour; you went to the dinner pail that you brought from home, and opened it and there you would find homemade bread, homemade butter, cookies, pie, maybe an apple or two, all the things you brought from home and all the things your mother divided for you. If you didn't bring it you didn't have anything to eat because there was ~~no~~ cafeteria to help you.

Now I'm going around the room, just a little bit, and tell you some of the contents that you see on the wall. You ask me what this rope here is for, so I'm going to pull on the rope, and if you will look at the ceiling of the room there, you will find two little trap doors. As I pull they will open. Now that is our ventilating system. The bad, foul air always gets heated and goes to the top of the room, and when the little trap doors are open, it goes up through into the attic, and we get rid of the foul air. That is the only thing we have.

When I go over here to the old board, you'll find that this is a wooden board, about ah, oh about two and a half feet wide, and above it is another one of the same width. It was nailed on there by the carpenter, some 127 years ago, and then he painted it black, and that is called a blackboard. That's how it got its name. This board has been written on by the children for 101 years. Also, this one over here next to it, that is one of the original boards that haven't been changed. But when I go to the next step, the next board over here, I find it slate. That was changed. The old wooden board was taken down and they brought slate and put it up there, and made a slate board; but you right now call it a blackboard, but it's really a slate board, the name has changed because of the stuff it's made of.

Now, over here too, we'll find some maps. This map here is about 115 years old. It's map of Niagara and Orleans County. One rather peculiar thing about this map is that it has all the roads on it, and it has along the roads, dots, and with names written after each dot. That tells you who was living here 115 years ago. If I look out of

PRATT

this window, I will see this house over there. I can look on this map and tell you who was living in that house 115 years ago. Many men and women have come here and hunted up where their grandfathers or grandmothers were living in this county 115 years ago.

Now we'll step over here to the corner. This next thing we have on the wall here is the certificates that the teachers had to teach. The teachers' certificates go back to 1838, and they are, the first of them, are all hand written, they were not printed at all. It was not one of the hardest things to get one of these old certificates. You went before three men who would ask you several questions, and if you was a pretty good looking lady, and had been to school for eight or nine years, and you was answering the few questions, they would give you a certificate to teach; but for only one year, and that was to teach in one room, one school, for one year. At the end of that year you had to go back and get another one. This has been changed from year to year, and always made a little more work for the people to get a certificate and become a teacher; and now you have to go four years beyond high school. It would be about eight years from the time you left the eighth grade in the old country school.

Over here in the corner we see a little case of schoolbooks. We took some of our most precious books and put them in here, and you can look at them because they're all open, but the paper is so brittle.

Here is Daniel Webster's blueback spelling book, and it is what he wrote when he was teaching school. This little book here only cost 19¢ and it was sold by the millions. It enabled him to keep his family for nearly ten years while he was writing his dictionary. Beside the book you see up here, we have about 400 in the library in the other room adjoining. We obtained these by writing in a teacher's magazine that we were building, ah, outfitting a school and making a museum of it, and for children to come and see the things; and I asked them to send me any old school books that they had, about 1900 or earlier. I had about 75 answers for that and I received some 400 old books, some of them going back to the year 1800. We have all kinds of school books, arithmetic, geography, spelling, reading books, and everything, sent to us.

Now we go on to the next place, and some of the children will want to know, 'Did you have report cards?', as you have now for your mother and father to sign. No, we didn't have report cards in those old days; but if you had had a perfect lesson, we'll say in spelling, for three or four weeks, and hadn't missed any words for three or four weeks, the teacher would give you a merit card. The merit card was just a little card, maybe two or three inches in size, and it told on there that you had been in attendance and had perfect lessons for a certain length of time, and you would receive one of those; and the child at the end of the year, who had the most merit cards, was called the best scholar of the school.

Moving along with the progress to the back of the room, we find these old pictures of groups of school children. These are all pictures of children who attended this school, and under each picture are the dates that go all the way back to the 1880's in this school, and there's the groups of children, who would like to have the pictures of all the teachers that taught here, but we haven't; but it shows many of them. Here are two little boys, standing on the front row down here, the Barnum boys. They went to school here, and then they started schools in other places; but they both entered the war. They were both in World War II. **One of them was shot down and killed over in Germany.** The other one died on the beaches of Normandy.

Coming over here, one step farther, you have these shelves here with the bird nests on, eggs and things in there, rocks and things. This is the nature study we had in those days. This is the same as your social science that you have today. The science work you have today is much different. We could study anything we wanted to, anything that we could find, specimens, and bring in. We could study the trees, we could study the flowers, we could study the birds; and we used to wait, to gather the birds' nests, until fall, when the birds had got through with them, and then we always studied the birds' nests in the fall and winter, and in the spring we studied the flowers. We bring specimens to school and study them, sometimes even try to draw and paint. That was our nature study, as we called it. Cornell used to send each child a little pamphlet of maybe two dozen pages, about some certain thing, about the weather, about the trees, about the

snowflakes, or things for children to read through and keep and study.

Now we would go to the next place over here, and we find a picture, a tin-type picture of Emily Hale. She was the first teacher in this school, way back in 1849. That's a long ways back. Here's some of the letters that she wrote. Here's her certificate to teach in this school for one year.

Stepping along to the next place, we find some pictures, old fashioned pictures that were in this school, and I put them up at the top. Underneath we have some of the works of the children, old magazines that are 40 or 50 years old; the teacher used to rip ideas out of for maybe her artwork or drawing and things like that.

Coming along a little bit farther, we have these flags up here. We have four different kinds of flags that we started out with before we had the regular flag that you know of today. Over here in the corner we have some stars over here; and then I usually ask the children, "How many stars did we start with?" They're always eager to tell me 13. That question is never missed. And then I'll ask them a little more about them and show them how the different ways they put them; and I'll ask them, "Where did they get the red, the white, and blue for our flag? Why didn't we have a yellow, green, and purple flag, instead of red, white, and blue?" Well, we got our colors from the English flag, cause we had been under the English flag for a good many years; but we changed it, we didn't want the same. So we took out this little corner up here, where it's blue, took the Saint Andrews Cross, and the Cross of England out of there, and there we put in our

let it down so the children can examine it and look at it. Now that gives them a good idea of size and the shape and the position of the continents in the ratio to each other and the oceans which are in between them. They can see that if they go straight east from where we live now they will strike southern Europe way over to the south and the Mediterranean Sea. Now, when they had studied this and they wanted to recite, the teacher pulled it up so they couldn't see it, and it was pulled up out of sight and that was the first one and that was used in this room here 100 years ago or 50 years ago and maybe all that time in between.

Over here we have one step farther we find some of the drawings. Up at the top we see little pictures here and drawings, and they're made into sort of books and the books tell stories about Thanksgiving. Here's one with a cherry tree and a hatchet. The teacher was required to teach drawing as well as the other things of all the grades.

Down below that is some problems that I got out of old books and out of examination papers. These here are arithmetic ones that they had to pass. At the end of the school year if you wanted to go from the fourth grade into the fifth grade, the teacher was sent an examination paper from Albany. The teacher did not know what was on that examination paper until she opened it up and gave it to you children to do the examples. Then, she couldn't give you easy examples; these were sent out of Albany. Now you had to take this examination and pass it to get into the next grade above your own. ~~And they also had the~~

~~examination papers in~~ (END OF SIDE ONE)

The examination papers, you remember, were sent from Albany and enough papers were sent for the 4th thru the 8th grades. Each child took about 4 or 5 of these for promotion to the next grade. If you passed all of them but say arithmetic, sometimes the teacher, in those olden times, would allow you to go from the 4th up to the 5th grade, but you would repeat your 4th grade work in arithmetic, which would be a class different from the 5th grade. Now that is the way we progressed our school examination. Those examination papers were held in January and in June. The teacher corrected the papers and made a report and sent it down to Albany. That was so they could know whether you were doing good work or poor work in any of your subjects.

Now we are going to step over here to the big board on the front of the room. This is the program that we used to have. I've told you that school started at 9 o'clock, and to be on time, you had to be in your seat when the bell rang; or if you didn't, you hurriedly got into your seat. Now notice: you had one seat that you usually kept the whole year. Now you notice that half of these seats are wide and double. Two children sat in them in olden times, if they had enough children. Over to my left hand side, you see one row of old desks that were just the same kind of desks as was made and were fastened to the floor. Those were the desks they had. Your seat did not fold up. After they were here about 40 years, they were replaced by boughten seats, but still they held two children. The iron, on the sides there, you can see, are from a factory, and the seat folds up. Your books are kept underneath and the seat was much easier to sit in because it was curved in the back. It didn't hurt your back so. And in the front of the desk, right in the middle, you see there is a hole in there. Now you will be asking me what that hole was for. Well, the hole was simply a little ink well. We should have some glass ink wells but I've been unable in all these years to find at least one of them. I've been promised them but they just don't seem to turn up. Two children used to sit in one seat. It worked out this way: we would never put 2 fourth grades in that same seat because when they were having their arithmetic, both of them would probably have the same answer. One would copy from the other. Or in spelling: when they wrote their spelling out, they could look over onto the other. So we put a 4th in with a 7th or 8th grade. Sometimes we would put a beginner (the first grade child) in with a 5th grader. We

would mix them up that way. I remember when I started to school; my sister was 4 years older than I and when I went, I sat in the seat where she was. My feet dangled from~~a~~ above the floor. She could reach the floor but I couldn't, so they had little boxes, like that, for very little children, underneath their part of the seat, to rest your feet on. Then we could go ahead and study. When I was studying my reading lesson and didn't know a word, I would just take my elbow and nudge my sister and I would point to the word that I wanted help on, and she knew what to do. She would look over on my book and if the word was l-o-o-k-i-n-g, she would say "looking" to me (quietly) and I would know that word. Looking. Now, she was my teacher in there and it helped me very much. This is one of the helps and one of the advantages of the old school.

Coming back to the front of the room, and the program that you see, you will see there is SINGING. All the children, no matter whether you was 6 years old or 16, we all sang! Usually two or three songs. Then we would have a little WORLD EVENTS, sometimes. When we would start in our regular work, usually we had ten minutes to take the books out and get started. The teacher would go around and answer questions if you didn't know what your lesson was for the day, and she would tell you what your lesson was. But everybody got their book out and everybody started to study. Within a few minutes, she would tap on the bell and she would say, "First Grade READING CLASS"; for those that started in school for the first year had a little sentence... a Primer... and they would bring their Primer and leave their seat where they had been studying and come up to the long seat on the front. The long seat was called the RECITATION SEAT. The people were reciting. They were telling the teacher what they had learned while studying. Now the first one was the READING CLASS. We always started with the smaller reading classes and she would hear the first grade read over their reading lesson, out loud. They would stand up, read out loud and the teacher would have each one do that. Each one would read to the teacher. She had a book so she knew whether they were reading right or not. At the same time, it was the teacher's duty to watch seven grades more in the back of the room, which should be studying. If she didn't find them studying, or someone who wasn't studying, she would point at them with her finger, or maybe snap her fingers, calling their attention to their work. When this class got thru, she gave them out their

lesson for the next class and sent them back to the seat. She would tap on the bell again and say, "SECOND GRADE READING". All those back there, seven grades, would be studying. The ones up in front would be reciting. This gave you more time to study and less time to recite. Classes were small and usually we didn't have more than five minutes for some classes with maybe only two or three in it. Maybe we had 10 or 15 minutes if it was the 8th grade and more in the class. We kept this up all day: children studying and the teacher hearing classes, recite. By the time we got to about half past ten, we had 15 minutes of recess. She would tap on the bell and say, "Now it's RECESS TIME." The children would always go outdoors in good weather, and play games. Or if it was wintertime, they would play games inside the school. In 15 minutes the school bell rang again and everyone came in from the outside, or took their seat if they were inside, and they started studying again. This went on from about quarter to eleven to twelve o'clock. In the forenoon you had your reading classes and you had your arithmetic classes. That's about all we got in in the forenoon. That took us up 'til about twelve o'clock.

Now it only took about 15 minutes for a child to get, as we used to say, eat up what little food we brought and it was enough for a child from home, and then they were ready to play. That gave about three quarters of an hour, 45 minutes to play. We went into the back yard. The big and the little played together... the games, unless they had a very large school. They all played together. Now, what did we play? You could play any kind of a game you wanted to. The children chose their own games. The teacher wasn't out there. She wouldn't come out. She was busy inside, correcting papers and getting work ready for the afternoon; getting those arithmetic lessons all corrected and handed back so you could correct them before you went home at night. She wouldn't appear unless there was a quarrel or some fighting or some trouble out there. Then she usually would come out and separate 'em and maybe bring in one or both of 'em and sit 'em down inside and make them go to study.

At one o'clock the bell would ring and they would come in again and they started the afternoon study and recitation. The first grade readers would read again. You read twice a day in the first, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades, usually. Then after that, time the reading classes were over, usually it was close to recess time in the afternoon.

Then the little folks, the first three grades who had all their work finished, could go home if they wanted to, if they lived close to the school, not very far away. But most of them came a distance and didn't go home. They stayed there until 4 o'clock and they went home with the older children because some of them had to walk a mile. They usually went with the older children.

So, what did they do after the last half of the afternoon? The little children could go outdoors if the weather was good and they could play whatever games they wanted to, or if it was in the winter, they went over into this corner over here. You see the little low table with the chairs made out of orange crates. The children over here played with these blocks, put this puzzle together or looked at these picture books here. Notice this is a colored picture book but it's all made out of cloth so it would last several years.

Now we are coming back over here to our program again. After recess, this was the time for the older children. She (the teacher) would only have the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades and then they would have their work... their English work, their geography work, their spelling work. You recited in one class and hurried back to your seat and studied on the thing that was coming first. After your English work, you knew that Geography, so when you went back to your seat, you studied your Geography until your Geography class. When your Geography class was over, then you went back to your seat and started your spelling because last thing before school was out, you had your Spelling classes and that took us up to 4 o'clock.

Now, we had more time to study than you do in your classes today, maybe. The recitation was short, but the teacher was right on the job. Spelling was looked over and you had to correct your paper and you'd have to write 'em out 5 or 10 times, and spell 'em to the teacher after your class, or the arithmetic had to be corrected. She kept tract of you. I think the teacher knew a little bit more about the amount that the child was learning than they do in the schools today.

Now, we want to step to one more thing here. That is, this case here. Here are CHILDREN'S PLAYTHINGS, that they had to play with in the olden days. We did not have as much money to play with. I went to school to a place way out in the country. If I went to town, Albion, I had to drive seven miles, and we only come there once a month maybe.

We didn't have very much money, so we didn't have very many boughten toys. We'd get maybe one or possibly two at Christmas time, but those weren't usually brought to school. In school we made a great many of our own. I'd ask my mother for a spool that the thread had come on, and when it was empty she would give it to me. I'd take my jack-knife and I'd whittle about half of it off, down to a point. Then I'd take another little stick of wood and fit it in there and make a point on that, with a little handle on the top. Then I would take it and spin it and... we had a top!! We used to race our tops and see who could make a top that would spin the longest. In here, you can see other things: here are some dominoes that are made out of paper cardboard. We had things that were whittled out; little animals that was whittled out, by the boys. Here is a chain that was whittled out of one stick of wood. You see how the little ~~xxx~~ links are all hooked together and a little hook on one end and a ring on the other? It took a lot of whittling and a lot of experience and you broke a lot of those before you got a chain whittled out that was perfect. Here is a BALL. I didn't have any bought baseballs to play with until I got to be 12 or 13 years old. I didn't have the money nor any place to buy them, so we used to make them. I would ask my mother for string. "Save all your string! I want all your string!" That was all winter and by the spring I would have quite a lot of string. I would wind it all together, just as tight as I could, into a little round ball until it got to nearly the size of an orange, or as big a ball as I wanted. Then I would take the top of somebody's shoe, one that wasn't worth anything (the top of the leather is a little bit softer) and I would cut that out. Then I would soak it in water overnight. In the morning I would take that ball of string and put it on top of the leather and I would cut it off in V-shape. If you cut it out with the wide end down to the bottom and bring it up and wrap it over there, you will find that that wide three-quarter piece would reach up to the center. Then you make four of those and then you bring another one up, over there, just the same shape, until it meets. Then the 3rd one, the 4th one, and with that, you have the ball all covered. Because the leather is soaked up you can take a needle and some heavy, black, course thread and sew those together and you have a ball!! Then I would bounce it on the floor and it would bounce back up. It was not as hard as the boughten ball, but those were the things we used and made in school.

Then we had other little things that we played with. We had one little puzzle which was very ingenious. It was just a little stick with one string ~~xxxx~~ tied to one end there, and it went thru a hole in the center and around back up to another hole in there on the other side. On each side of those, there was a loop left and in that loop was a little button; one button in the loop and another button in the other side. Now the trick was, to pass one button over to where the other button was; but the hole in the center was so small that it wouldn't go thru there. You couldn't untie it; you couldn't cut it, but you could pass the button over to the other side if you knew how. Now that was a puzzle and it would keep you busy for a long time. It even stumped some of the bigger folks. We made many other things. We had many whistles. Instead of buying them in the spring, we would make them out of willow limbs. They made very good whistles. We would whittle them out with our jack-knife. We would take the bark off from one section of it, cut a channel in there, and a hole for the air to go in the front of it. It would go into this channel and come out another hole and we made a fairly good whistle. The only thing was, they would dry out. Probably the thing that children enjoyed more than anything else was the tumbling blocks. They are very ingenious. Blocks that are about $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide and about 2" long and are hooked together by sort of little bands of rubber. As you tip this over, the block that you touch next below the one that you hold in your hand, will fall down and go way down to the bottom; then you tip it back and then tip it over again and they continually appear to fall down there. The children used to like to make those. I never let them play with mine for too long for they would soon get it out of order. The rubber bands had to be in just such an order. Now those are some of the things that we had to play with and they were manufactured right at home. Sometimes your father would help you whittle out some of these things or make them if you couldn't. We always liked to bring a new puzzle to school because we could do it and the rest of them couldn't. And we wouldn't tell them!! Not for a long while anyway.

Another question that they had, little bit of conundrum and stories and things like that, whenever we did have the time, or if it was a very rainy day; or in the winter-time the teacher would have, at recess, some things that they could amuse the children by. There was one thing I always liked to spring on the children, and that was this:

There was a story about a boy and some ducks.... The little boy had some ducks. Another boy asked him, "How many ducks have you got, Davey?" "Well," he says, "I've got two ducks ahead of a duck; I've got two ducks behind a duck and I've got one duck in the middle." Now, how many ducks did Davey have? The whole school would try it. There might be 50 children there that day and they would have the answers anywhere from 1 - 10. I used to let them raise their hands. I would never tell them who was right or wrong. Now the first time around, there might not be any who had the right answer; maybe one or two. I would say it again. (repeats story). The common answer was five, but sometimes it was 4, or 6 or 7 or 8. Sometimes they would say "three", which was the right answer! But I wouldn't tell them. Usually the one that had said "three ducks" would change the next time around and the next time have some other number. Finally I would show them on the board, putting three dots on the board. I would say "these three over here are ahead of the last one; then the head duck has two ducks behind and there is one duck in the middle. That is three ducks!" Now that amused the children and they had many good times over that. Another thing the children liked to hear was "tongue twisters". Sometimes I would ask them if they knew any tongue twisters and conundrums, and things like that. One of them I used to tell was this: "Well, good morning Madam, to Eve, said Adam. Good morning, to him, said she." After awhile they would get onto that, so I would say "You seem to be early or late. You used to be behind before, but now you're first at last!" Those are the things that amused the children. It gave them a little pleasure in going to school. I would sometimes wind up by saying this one: "A fly and a flea in a flu in a prison. Now whatever could they do? Said the fly, let us flee; let us fly said the flea. So they flew thru a flaw in the flu." By that time they would all be laughing and want me to say it again. (repeats). Those are some of the tongue twisters. We also had some songs that we used to sing, like "Old Grumble" and "Spring Once Said to the Nightengale". Now it would be a shame to stop the school and not give the children some time to ask some questions. They always wanted to ask questions. They always wanted to know certain things about the old schools. Someone had told them, and one of the questions they would always ask: "Well, what about a dunce hat? Where is the Dunce stool? Did you have it?" "No, I don't remember ever seeing a dunce cap or stool when I went

to school, way back before 1900." But in the old, old schools, 150 years ago, they did have dunce caps and dunce stools and such things. By this time, and this would usually be a boy, would ask, "Did you get lickings in school? Did the teacher punish you?" I'd say "Yes, the teacher would punish you. The teacher had a right and it was her duty and lots of them thought she wasn't a good teacher if she didn't punish some a little bit!" Now by this time, some bright little boy would ask me, "Did you ever get any punishment when you went to school?" I would smile and say, "Yes. I got punished three times, by the same teacher. When I was quite a young boy. I'll have to tell you about it, won't I?" So I would say that she made a rule that when we were in school we could not throw anything in the school. Well, that was alright. When school was in session we couldn't throw anything, and we seldom did. But sometimes the teacher didn't get there and in the wintertime we used to get to school before the teacher did. She would only get there just a little bit before nine and sometimes we would get there 10 or 15 minutes earlier. One day I was throwing my mitten up into the air and catching it. I threw one up and then the teacher walked in. When the mitten came down, I caught it and she saw who was throwing the mitten! So she whipped me for that, although school hadn't started. I didn't say anything but in after-years I kinda got caught up with her. She was my teacher but I taught in Barre Center and I was teaching there in the large room and she was teaching in the small room; so she was under me. But I never twitted her about whipping me when I was a little boy in the school. I never said anything to her, but I should have... maybe.

Now I get the signal from your bus driver that it is time for you to "load up", so if you children will pick up your things... do not leave any of your things here... your hats and coats and things, because I find many of them. Fall in line and you can go out to your bus and "load up" and return to your school. I hope you had a good time and sometime maybe you will be able to come back to the old rural school of cobblestones at Childs, New York.

* * * * *

First half of tape was typed by students at Medina High School.
 Second half of tape and all editing and indexing was done by
 Helen M. McAllister.

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Pratt Gets Pupils Thinkin' Lincoln

By TOM BOWERS

ALBION — Bearing a startling resemblance to Abraham Lincoln—the man he has imitated for several years—J. Howard Pratt Friday recalled the life of the nation's 16th president before an estimated 200 Albion Central School third graders.

Lincoln's birthday was yesterday.

Pratt's 30-minute "address" was light. It touched upon such points as education, love of country, hard work, and respect for parents.

But Pratt in his whimsical attire couldn't avoid becoming the children's celebrity of the day. Children "ooh'ed and ah'ed" at Pratt's stove-pipe hat and thin black beard, while others surged forward to catch a closer glimpse.

Town of Gaines historian, teacher emeritus, and Albion football "hall of famer," Pratt first posed as the country's 16th president as part of Gaines' Sesquicentennial celebration in the early 1960s.

"People back then began to say that I looked so much like Lincoln, that I decided to go to Washington to find out more about him," Pratt said. To test people's reactions there, he took along his "Abe" costume.

Pratt's trip to Washington D.C. in June 1962 was nothing short of startling to those who witnessed him touring the city in his Lincoln outfit.

"At the Lincoln Memorial, my resemblance to him (Lincoln) created such excitement that the guards came over and told me I'd better get away, I was getting more attention than the statue," he said.

He later toured the White House "where everybody wanted to get a picture of me," he said.

"As I came out of the White House, I was standing on the corner waiting for a cab to pick me up to take me to the Library of Congress," Pratt explained, "when a little short man came up to me and said, 'Well, well, Abe, I didn't know I'd been drinking that much.'"

A Washington newspaper reporter also noticed Pratt on



Pratt As Lincoln

the street corner, took his picture, and wrote an article about him.

Since about 1965, Pratt — posing as Abe — has spoken about Lincoln to area students.

"I've gotten lots of fun out of it," he said.

After Friday's presentation, Pratt could be seen gently

strutting back to his car outside the East Avenue Primary School, still dressed as the "Great Emancipator."

"I don't have a Lincoln," Pratt said, referring to his standard automobile. "If they'd had cars back then, Lincoln would've probably driven a Model-T."

D.H.

2-13-1978

BUFFALO, N. Y., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1967



Spending an old-fashioned schoolday at a one-room schoolhouse, Miss Joan A. Willert and her second graders from Barnard Elementary School, near Rochester, learn what it was like when their grandparents went to school. Holding the switch, is their

olden-days "teacher"—78-year-old J. Howard Pratt, vice president of the Cobblestone Society of Western New York. At left are old box, and round stoves. Slate boards are stacked on the teacher's desk, and the round globe above him can be pulled down.

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GAINES — It is said that history is neither more nor less than biography on a large scale.

Amend that statement to include "and autobiography on a small scale," and J. Howard Pratt would probably agree with it.

Historians have the tendency to give the extraordinary and omit what everyone wants to know about,

says Orleans County's dean of local history.

"History is not only what we read about in books and learn about in school," Pratt said in an interview at his home in Gaines. "It's a lot of everyday life."

Some historical accounts of the American experiment "don't tell how a farmer had to sweat and work to make a

livin'," he says.

At the age of 89, Pratt is a stickler for details. He remembers what President McKinley wore in a parade at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901 the day before his assassination.

He recalls the days when he was a farmer and drove his cattle from Williamsville near Buffalo to his pasture land here in Orleans County. The distance — about 50 miles — took about three days to complete, he said.

And he can never forget the odor that lingered in the kitchen after his mother had baked fresh muffins with honey and molasses.

"People are interested in how people lived and what they did," Pratt said.

His upcoming book, "Memories of Life on the Ridge," is a personalized account of "things we talked about, what we ate, how we cooked it, our conversation in the evening," and other local lore, he explained.

The book, Pratt's first, is being published through the sponsorship of the Orleans County Historical Association. Pratt says he'll be out helping to promote the work and raise funds by offering autographed copies when it is out on Nov. 15.

The historical account will cover the lives of common folks here in Orleans from the turn of the century through the 1920's, he said.

The book is actually taken from a five-year series of articles entitled "Saga of the Ridge" which was published in the Journal-Register from 1964 to 1969.

A committee of the Historical Association has been reviewing the articles and editing the material for book form.

"People were asking me all the time if I was going to put the articles into a book," he said with a scrapbook saddled on his knees, "and now I finally have."

"I never wanted to be a writer," he says, "But I always liked to tell stories."

"Some of the historical things

that happened out here in this county are very important," he said. "If the older people don't write them down, they'll be lost."

While working most of his life as a farmer, Pratt was also a school teacher in the days when one instructor taught eight grades in a one-room schoolhouse. Pratt says he started teaching in 1911 for \$11 a week. He was married for 57 years to the former Leola Budd and has two sons and two daughters.

"You have a different view of life as you grow older and see things," he says, then looks at the interviewer and notes that "you're not old enough to see all the changes."

Pratt has lived at his home on the Ridge for 85 years. When he's not browsing through his collection of artifacts, antiques and historical books, Pratt keeps an active schedule with his hobbies of painting and restoring antique furniture.

He also teaches a course in weaving seats for antique chairs and lectures at local schools on his favorite historical personality — Abe Lincoln.

Pratt likes to travel, and recently completed his third trip to Ireland.

"I kissed the Blarney Stone when I was over there this summer," he said, "and it's supposed to loosen up the tongue."

Persons who have stopped at Pratt's house to browse through his antiques say he has never needed the aid of the Blarney Stone.

"I love to talk to folk," he admits. "I love to travel and meet people because I learn a lot."

J. Howard Pratt, like few others can, continues to reach new milestones as he approaches his 90th year.

"There's not many as old as I am that are in shape to write these stories down," he says.

Pratt says there's no secret to his longevity. "I always had to work," he explains as he flexes a bicep. "It only grows strong if you use it."

"Memories of Life on the Ridge"
Chronicles Life of Howard Pratt

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Reception To Honor Author

oral H.

A reception to honor author J. Howard Pratt is scheduled for Sunday, December 3rd, at Swan Library, Albion, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The Orleans County Historical Association is sponsoring this occasion in honor of the publication of Mr. Pratt's "Memories of Life on the Ridge." Mr. Pratt will autograph copies of his book during the afternoon, on request.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas D'Andrea of Gaines Basin Road are in charge of this reception, assisted by Dr. Neil Johnson and Mrs. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Vanderlaan, Miss Jane T. Pearce, and other members of OCHA.

The occasion is a tribute to Mr. Pratt from his friends for his work in the field of history. One of the founders of the Historical Association, Mr. Pratt has been a director since its beginning. He was also active in Orleans County's Centennials Corporation, being both a director and a member of its Editing and Publishing Committee. This committee supervised the preparation of the Bicentennial County History in 1976.

Having resided all his life in Gaines, in a house that Pratts have occupied for more than 100 years, Mr. Pratt is considered an authority on its history,

Historian, 90, Survives Fall

GAINES — J. Howard Pratt, colorful 90-year-old historian, author and pioneer resident of Ridge Road, is reported as resting comfortably in Genesee Hospital, Batavia, today after surviving a fall from the roof of his home.

Close relatives today reported that he has a fractured arm, a fracture of the hip area near the pelvis, a black eye and facial bruises, but apparently no internal injuries.

It is not known exactly how far Mr. Pratt fell in the mishap which occurred as he was cleaning out gutters atop his home. If he fell from a lower roof, it would have been 10 to 12 feet, it was reported.

The accident is judged to have taken place between 1:30 and 2:30 yesterday afternoon.

Pratt was found lying on the ground by a granddaughter, Diane Pratt, who lives nearby and who was walking to her car to drive to work. She summoned other family members and Pratt was taken first to the Arnold Gregory Hospital here before transfer for orthopedic treatment.

A son-in-law of the injured man, Richard Rustay, acknowledged that Pratt is "a pretty tough old fellow" and said he had no fear of heights.

It was considered remarkable within the past year that Pratt climbed atop the Universalist Church roof in Albion to help with repairs.

He was acclaimed this year on the publication of his latest book, "Memories of Life on the Ridge."

10-5-1979

its schools, and its folk lore. He has been historian of the Town of Gaines since 1963.

For the Gaines Sesquicentennial of 1959, he was co-chairman, with Cary H. Lattin, of the project, and helped prepare the historical booklet which was published.

In 1968 Mr. Pratt was awarded a certificate of commendation by the American Association for State and Local History for his work in the starting for the Cobblestone Society. In 1968 fifteen such certificates were awarded in the nation. Mr. Pratt's was the only one to a New Yorker, and so

far as is known he is the only native of Orleans County ever so honored by the Association.

In recent years he has been consulted by various groups interested in oral history and in early education. A professor at Canisius College made tapes of an interview with him this summer. The Oral History Committee of OCHA has also interviewed him.

His book, "Memories of Life on the Ridge," just published, gives fascinating glimpses of the lives of the Pratts and of other residents of the Ridge in the 1890 to 1920 period.

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GAINES — Orleans County Historical Association met recently at the Gaines-Carlton Community Church. Howard Pratt was surprised by the over 60 persons present with a "This Is Your Life" program in honor of his 90th birthday and under the chairmanship of Mrs. Ruth Applegate.

Mr. Pratt was born on Aug. 15, 1889 to Mr. and Mrs. John Henry Pratt. He and his sister, Florence (James), attended a rural school on the Ridge Road. Howard was a member of the first agricultural class at Albion High School. He attended training class and earned a certificate to teach.

His first school was at Riches Corners. "J. Howard" married the former Leola Budd. They had four children, Marjorie, John, Beth and Roger. There are now 18 grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Many of them were present for the occasion.

During the 1920s Mr. Pratt taught at Gaines and in the '30s at Eagle Harbor. Some of his former classmates were in attendance.

Pratt was the organizer of the first 4-H club known as the "Potato Club" and during World War II he became the county 4-H agent.

For about 10 years Pratt spent two weeks each summer at Cooperstown, N.Y. learning crafts. He later became known as the "chair man" and taught chair caning classes in his home.

Howard, very interested in Abraham Lincoln, would often dress in Lincoln costume and whiskers and lectured groups of school children about the great president.

He even appeared in Washington, D.C. in this dress and caused heads to turn. At



NINETY BUSY YEARS--J. Howard Pratt, author of the Orleans County Historical Association book, "Memories of Life on the Ridge", and his sister, Mrs. Florence James, cut Mr. Pratt's 90th birthday cake at the surprise birthday party for him at the August meeting of the Orleans County Historical Association last week.

this point Pratt was presented with a handsome book about Lincoln by the group at Gaines.

He helped to organize the Cobblestone Society and

suggested re-creating classes in the Cobblestone School. Many groups of children from W.N.Y. have attended and seen what school was like "in the golden days."

Mr. Pratt's book, "Memories of Life on the Ridge," was published by the Association in 1978. Miss Irene Gibson presented Howard with a gift of the typed manuscript.

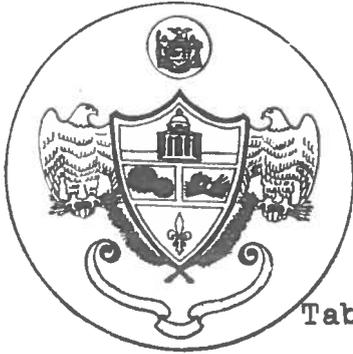
Pratt has made several trips to the British Isles. He has just recently returned from his latest visit.

His many friends and relatives gave him a standing ovation and sang "Happy Birthday."

A birthday cake and punch were served. And to round out

Aug. 14, 79
**Multi-Faceted Fellow
Is J.H.P. of Gaines**

the evening Pratt gave an account of his latest trip to the Isle of Guernsey and to Ireland.



Orleans County Historical Association

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SUBJECTS

- ** The Homes of Yesteryear vs. the Homes of Today
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 - Doctors: Frank Lattin, Parke, and Earmon
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- ** Home weddings
 - Edith Cleaver's wedding
- ** Entertainment in the Home
 - Story tellers and some stories
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 - the hired man / the hired girl

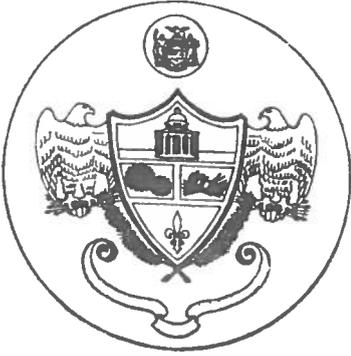
 - Water Supply for the Home: soft and hard water, etc.
 - outside toilet/ and some memories

 - Home Barber Shop
- ** Peddlers : tin, broom, grocery, rag
 - Gypsies
- ** Fur Trapping : skunks, coon, mink, etc.

- Travels to Ireland (with an Irish song... on the tape)
 - tours, going alone, people, friends, various incidents
 - B & B, etc.

- The Country School Teacher

1889 -



Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW # 2

Mr. J. Howard Pratt
Ridge Road
Gaines, New York

J. Howard Pratt was born August 15, 1889. At the time of this interview, Mr. Pratt is 91 years of age.

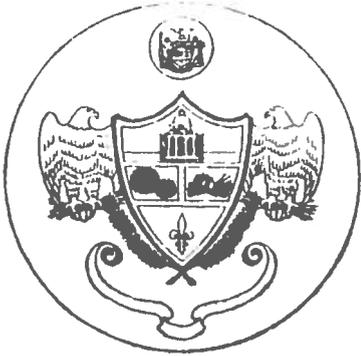
The interview is conducted by Ruth T. Applegate of Albion, N.Y. Also present during the interview is Helen McAllister of Medina.

P Pratt

A Applegate



J. Howard Pratt and Mrs. Applegate



Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

J. Howard Pratt
Signed
8/6/1980
Date

Understood and agreed to:

Ruth Applegate
INTERVIEWER
8/6/80
Date

For the Orleans County Historical Association, August 6th, 1980, Mrs. Ruth Applegate of Albion, New York is interviewing Mr. J. Howard Pratt of Gaines, New York. Helen McAllister of Medina, New York is also present.

A Mr. Pratt, how does the home today differ from the home when you were a little boy?

P Well the home today is much different and much is missing in the modern home compared to what it used to be when I was a boy. This old house was probably placed here and added to about 1845 and it's been the home of the Pratt family, with my grandfather living and dying here, my uncle living here and I've been living here for 85 years; so it's an old family home. It is unnecessary probably to say the home is larger than many homes but it has housed a great deal in my mind at least. Probably many others think the same. Then the home was much different than it is today in the things that transpired within the home.

In the case of sickness, we had no great buildings and great hospitals to go to. The home was the hospital. It was the place where you lived and died. When you became sick, some of the family drove a horse to Gaines to get Doctor Earmon, or to Knowlesville to get a doctor from there, or from Eagle Harbor, or Waterport. All little towns had doctors in those olden days. When sickness came, and I'm going to take a typical case when I was sick because I remember going through all of these things: a sick boy, not too old, when I was taken sick. They sent for the doctor at Gaines, Dr. Earmon. He came and looked me all over and said, "I think Howard has got the Diphtheria". Of course that alarmed my folks a great deal. My sister had gone to school so the doctor put a sign on the house: KEEP OUT - DIPHTHERIA. You were under quarantine and my sister could not come back from school to enter here. My parents arranged with a neighbor east of us, Mrs. Warn. She agreed to care for Florence (my sister) until I was better -- or died. When Florence came home that evening, she couldn't get into our house. She had to go to Mrs. Warn's, and there she stayed over a month. Dr. Earmon was an old doctor at

that time. I can remember Dr. Earmon because he'd been here to our home several times before for different sickness. I remember he had a lot of medicine in his case. He'd give me a half a glass of water. He opened up his satchel and he took out a white powder. "Now I want a spoon", and he put a spoonful of that white powder into the glass and stirred it up with the spoon and said, "He's to take a teaspoon full of this every four hours". That was my start on medicine.

My folks were very alarmed over my sickness because the little girl across the road, near my age, had died within three months with Diphtheria. This alarmed my parents very much. So they hired a Practical Nurse. She was a niece of my father's who had gone from house to house; a Practical Nurse, not a Registered Nurse. She learned it the hard way. She came and was here all the while that I was sick.

A What was her name?

P Sarah Stevens. She lived here and I remember one of the things she did, under the direction of the doctor: she took a newspaper, rolled it up and made a sort of a little horn. Then she put a teaspoon and a half of dry sulfur in the horn. She would hold her breath and say, "Now open your mouth". I would open my mouth and she would blow sulfur down my throat as I held my breath. I was not so sick but what I knew about all that was going on. I'll tell you, they tended right to me night and day!

In those olden times if they said they wanted medicine given every four hours, that meant six times in 24 hours, or in one day. Someone stayed up all night. If you did not have a nurse, some of the neighbors would come in and do the night-trick, or part of the night-trick. It was common for people to go to somebody else's house and give medicine and anything that you wanted there. That was my case of Diphtheria.

Now after a while, I got along so that they said that I was a little better and I commenced to gain and come back and I could eat more things. The doctor would come every day for a while, and then he came every other day, and at the last he would come every three or four days.

A Did he have a car then, or did he have a horse?

P Oh no, he didn't have a car. You drove the horse down to Gaines to call the doctor who went out and harnessed his horse. He would drive back and would tie his horse to the hitching post, and come in. I can remember several doctors tying their horses to that same hitching post.

A What did he charge for a house-call?

P Well, I just can't tell you on this but probably two to three dollars; they were not very expensive. After he'd been here once, if there was anybody else sick near here, he would make a circuit up this way and might go to two or three homes after leaving Gaines and traveling to the west. Then he would probably go through Knowlesville or Eagle Harbor, making a circuit and get back into Gaines, or he would go where-ever the next case called him.

Then there was no telephones. He couldn't be re-directed from here by a telephone as he could in the later years. After a while I got better, the nurse was discharged and I got up. They took the sign off the house and Florence came home and we lived again as we had been living.

We'll start with the vaccination. In those days we had no vaccination even for Small-Pox. I was not vaccinated for Small-Pox until I commenced teaching in 1911, and then you had to be vaccinated ! And I had to keep that up when I was teaching in different places -- being vaccinated every seven years. One time I was so sick with the vaccination that I had to get a substitute teacher.

A How old are you now Mr. Pratt?

P I'm 91 years old.

A When were you born?

P I was born August 15, 1889. That makes my birthday in August.

All of the sicknesses didn't come out as well as I did and oft times there were deaths in the houses. My Grandfather lived and died in this house and his funeral was here and he was buried from this house. Then, my Uncle Will lived here

and he died here. Then when my father lived here, one of the maids, or the girl that worked for Mother, died here with Appendicitis. They didn't call it Appendicitis, they called it the "stoppage of the bowels." Her life could have been saved if they knew what they do now about medicine and had hospitals and medicine to take care of her. She lived here and nothing seemed to help her that they gave her. They didn't have anything that was worth anything anyway at that time. So, we had many deaths. My wife's mother died in this house. My wife died here, some eight years ago.

The body of the dead was not taken from the home. The Undertaker came here and laid them out in their good clothes. You would go to McNall's, or whoever you were going to at that time, to select your casket. The family would look them over and order the casket. The undertaker would come here and bring the casket and put the body into the casket. The casket was placed usually in the parlor, in this room here to my right. (NOTE: Mr. Pratt is sitting in his dining room).

A Did they embalm them at home?

P They didn't very much. They didn't embalm them as they do now, but they did a little; they did just a little. Of course the crepe was on the door and there was a time of mourning for the people and many people would come here and call. Usually the third day was the day of the funeral.

The Undertakers would come here with a vehicle; it wasn't a wagon but it was a big cart and they brought lots of chairs, probably 50 extra chairs. They would set them up in your home. If you had lots of room they would fill two rooms with chairs and so when the crowd came, because there usually was a crowd to country funerals, there would be seats for all. But in small houses --- I've seen the two main rooms of the house filled up and men standing outdoors listening, especially in Mrs. Neal's which I will mention later.

A What about the cost?

P Well, the cost was not over a quarter to what it is now.

A And the minister came, of course?

P The minister came; you hired the minister that you were with from whatever church you believed in. He preached a sermon. Sometimes in the olden days they used to have singing.

My father was a pretty good singer and he and Mrs. Stanley would sing at funerals and usually one song, probably three verses to the song. That was the only thing that they had a part in. The minister gave the prayers and readings from the Bible.

A Do you remember a song they may have sung at that time?

P "Nearer My God to Thee" was one of the favorites. They had other ones, of course, but that was always appropriate to any funeral. The funerals were quite an event. The neighborhood stopped work and they all went to the home; even the men would stop work and go there. Some of them would be dressed up and some of them would be in their working clothes. But there was honor that they should go to a funeral, especially with the neighbors. The neighbors were much closer than they are today, and so they all gathered there.

Now, I want to take up the funeral of Mrs. Neal. She lived down just east of the burying ground, the Otter Creek Burying Ground, about two-tenths of a mile. You go down there and I think Hollenbeck lives there now. Mrs. Neal lived there and I remember going to that funeral because I was quite a young man at that time and the men,-- there were so many at the funeral that we couldn't all go in; the men and myself stayed outside. The door was open, it was in the summertime, and we could hear a little bit of the sermon but not too much of it. But of course we knew when they got through; and then when the funeral was ended the hearse, which was a horse-drawn vehicle, usually with black horses... there was glass on three sides of the hearse (the back was glass), and the casket was put in the hearse.

Usually there was four pall-bearers, or six if it was a large, heavy person; but that was the usual number, and they were put into the hearse and then they would drive ahead. The minister would go first and then the hearse, and then they would stop a little bit and then the very close relatives would get into a buggy (wagon) or carriage, and they would pull up next to the hearse. The husband or the wife, whichever one was living, and their children, and then the next nearest relatives, and then the farther relatives from there until the friends ended up the funeral procession. But they

would wait until they all were loaded by stopping in the road. It's two-tenths of a mile from where she lived, over to the burying ground and I remember distinctly that the head of the procession got over there and they were just loading up the last of the friends, showing that the procession was two-tenths of a mile long. That shows the number. Of course she was English, and all the English people from this part of the country went there, and all the neighbors too. But that shows how many people went to one of these old country funerals. We thought it was necessary; we thought it was an honor to the dead and we always attended. If they were within a mile or two miles everybody went.

A Did the neighbors help to feed any of the family?

P Yes, they would send in food during this time. Usually right after the death for a day or two, and the day of the funeral, the food was sent in. This is one of the things that we still remember about friends in the country.

A What color did the family usually wear?

P The family used to wear black and all the relatives wore black. If they had black dresses, they would always wear the black dresses. That was the sign of mourning. The other people wore dark clothes if they had them... there were not many bright reds and things like that ever seen at a funeral.

A Did they ever have (and wear) arm bands?

P I don't remember them having arm bands.

Not all of the time was there a death in the family. Many times there were lesser diseases: Whooping Cough, Measles, and things like that; colds and so on. In the case of lesser sickness, Mother was the nurse. She was the nurse for the household. She'd had lots of experience with the sickness. At that time they didn't have as much medicine as today. The medicine you had in the home was Quinine, Whiskey, hot water, and hot water bottles, Skunk's Oil, and Mutton Tallow, which Lanolin is derived from. So when you had a cold, Mother was always on the job with something to break that cold up. We didn't know whether it was going to be a cold or whether it was going to be the Grippe, so if they thought you were going to be real sick, or if you had any touch of fever, they would commence to load you with Quinine.

We had Quinine in bulk, a little bit of white powder. I remember Father always used to measure it out on the small blade of his jack-knife. It was bitter and we didn't like to take it but we took it because we'd rather have the Quinine than we would being sick. Then it was followed by things that was hot, to heat you up. The older ones and even the younger children; they would take boiling hot water, as hot as you could drink, and they would put in about a table-spoon of Whiskey in a whole cup of hot water, put sugar in it and then you had to drink it. You had to be in bed, and then we had hot water bottles placed around us; mostly glass fruit jars, around us with hot water. Now the idea was to get the patient to sweat. Whenever you can sweat you will break the Grippe or cold. ... I remember later doctors coming and giving me pills that caused me to sweat, and then they'll say, "That breaks the fever". It doesn't let the fever get started and get ahold. So they usually would put the hot water jars around us... and then we would get in there and roast until we got sweating good. Sometimes your undershirt would be just wringing wet.

A How about your family during World War I; did any of them get the Flu?

P Yes, I remember having it and I remember we had Doctor Waters at that time. (Doctor) Earmon was dead, so Dr. Waters from Knowlesville came here. Tied his horse out to the hitching post and stopped on the stoop and put a handkerchief over his nostrils. It's the only thing he could do to prevent catching the flu. He came in and he ladled out Quinine and things like that. They did not have, at that time, the medicine that would knock out the serious fevers that they have now. When the sickness got into Pneumonia, they didn't have anything that would knock the Pneumonia out at that time. If you got Pneumonia, your chances was only one in two or three that you would get through. That's what the most of them died with . That's what got the young and the old because lots of people in the 20's died. It (flu) wasn't a disease of the elderly people entirely; everyone had it. I can remember that when I got it, we had a new furnace just put in.

In addition to other medicine we had Skunk Oil. That was something that you would rub on. Now, that isn't the Essence-of-Skunk that you can remember by smelling. It had no smell at all. I've got some here in the house if you want to try some.

A No thanks!!

P But that is good to rub on your chest. Mother would always put ~~an~~ a Mustard Plaster on the chest and almost burn you to get the fire in there. I took the Skunk Oil and poured my hand full, like that, and wet my chest, just as if it was water, and rubbed it on there; got right down on my hands and knees and let the heat from the register drive it in, and when that was dry I'd oil my chest and let it dry in; then I went to bed. ~~And~~ I took all the other medicine and in the morning my fever was relieved, my chest had loosened up. That was one of the things that they did. Now we didn't have as hard a case of this old Grippe as they do now-a-days. Sometimes it was almost impossible to knock it out. But now of course they have good medicine and they will dope you with pills, even in your blood, if they want to catch you quick enough. Many of the diseases have been headed off by the doctors and their medicine.

Now I want to tell you about another disease that I had and another sickness that I had because I haven't heard of one like this in a great many years. Back in the days when they cleared off the land and the earth was full of germs, as they used to call them. They didn't call them germs as we think of them today. There was something in the soil, that when this fresh soil was stirred up and the sun warmed it up, it would cause the people to have a fever one day and severe chills the next day until you were just shaking. You couldn't hold still!! It was usually caught on the new land.

Father had 20 acres of new land down on the Kenyonville Road and one year he broke it up; and I was just old enough, a young man, and I learned to plow down there on that old stony land. I hadn't been plowing there very long -- we would go down there with two teams: one team on the wagon and another team tied behind. My team was tied behind. I started plowing

in the fore-noon, ate dinner and after dinner I layed down and I commenced to shake, and I shook the wagon!! The man that was with me was named Kelly, Harry Kelly. He was the hired man. He says, "I believe you're sick". And I says, "I'm sick, I know it!" And he said, "You better not go to work". Well, he went to work; it was way down there. He wanted to do some plowing and so he would plow awhile. But in the middle of the afternoon he said, "I believe I better take you home". So he took his team and put it on the wagon and we came home. We stopped at the house and he said, "I've got a sick boy in the wagon". Mother ran out and they got me into the house and put me in this room here to my right. I had a fever, and they sent for the doctor, to Gaines. This time it was (Doctor) Frank Lattin. Well, the doctor came and he didn't know what was the matter with me. He said, "Probably you've got the old Fever and Ague", but he said, "I don't know for certain". But he said, "I'll leave you some medicine". And he left me a lot of medicine, and now he says, "I'll come back early in the morning and we'll see what we can find out". He came back in the morning and he said, "Yes, that's what you've got". And he said, "I'll put you under Quarantine and you'll have to take my medicine". So there I was, in bed again. As I remember it was the last of June when I was taken sick. The 4th of July it was a very hot day, the folks were outside and they were having ice cream, cake and lemonade and things that were cold, and I laid inside shaking with the fever. I said, "You think it's warm? How would you like to have a fever today?" But the medicine took hold and, after a few days, the medicine got the better of the fever and the fever died down. But the fever was something you didn't get over very quickly. It took quite a bit of your strength out of you before your fever would die. We used to call it "Wearing the fever away". It left you weak. It was nearly a month before I got back onto my feet and got so I could get around and do any kind of work at all; even then I couldn't plow but I could do a few chores.

A Is that similar to the 24 hour virsu?

P Well, I guess so. I don't know just what they call it now. Usually medicine will knock it out if they can get here in time. Later... I had Dr. Parke. One of the first places he was at when he came to Albion was down at my house. I was sick upstairs and he gave me something that knocked the fever right out. He got here in the evening and fore midnight, I was sweating a great deal, the next morning I was over the worst of it--- just as quick as that. But in old times we just had to wear it out. And lots of people in the olden days when they first settled here, they didn't even have a doctor so they had to wear it out. If they were a frail person who wasn't strong, or anything the matter, or a woman who had just had a baby and was "down in the flesh," or anything like that, they were sometimes worn out by the fever and died.

A What about herbs? They used herbs didn't they?

P Yes, we had a few but Mother wasn't much of a Herb Doctor. She had cat-nip for the cats, and she had a few herbs but she didn't have anything much. She used to raise sage for the seasoning of the meat, but she was not a Herb Doctor.

A Mr. Pratt, what else happened in the home that you can tell us?

P Well, the house or the home, we should call it a home because it was more than a house -- it was a home in a great many different ways. All the events in your life seemed to happen around the home.

Now in the olden times we never went and had church weddings; they were unthought of when I was a child, and even I wasn't married in a church. Maybe that's why it didn't work the best. The weddings were in the home, sometimes small weddings, only just the two families of those to be united would come. Where I was married I think there was only nine people there besides the minister.

My sister had a wedding in our home, and of course my mother and father had a wedding in their home. Now, it's

go to the church and other things. But the weddings were all small, not too many gifts given because we didn't invite many people so you did not get very much. Sometimes they would give you things afterwards. But once in a while even the country people, when I was small, took an air on themselves. I remember one wedding where one of the girls which I had been in school with. She always had a pretty good idea that she was "on the top shelf" all the while. When she married a man that had a little money, they had to have a wedding; so I'm going to tell you something about Edith Cleaver's wedding. She's passed away now so she can't hear what I'm telling.

They had a big wedding, a big house, and they had a nice wedding and there were many, many people invited there. It was in the later part of the day. It seems as though it was five or six o'clock for the wedding, and afterwards she had a big party. All kinds of food: meats and tea and coffee. Not any liquor that I can remember because in those days liquor hadn't entered weddings or high society.

A Did they have music?

P They had a little music but not much. She wasn't musical so she didn't have too much music. But I remember one thing she did have: that was a very nice cake. This was the first time that I ever saw it. Half a muskmelon, or a small cantaloupe was cut in two and the inside dug out and ice-cream put in there. They had home-made ice cream in the melon. It was delicious because it was the time when the muskmelons, as we used to call them, were ripe. And somewhere she got enough to serve everybody with ice cream. Then they had a great time. They had some music afterwards, and they had ^(the newly weds) had quite a time getting away because they didn't have any automobiles. Finally they slipped off through the back of the house and around through the orchard and got away; the people didn't know just when they left. After her marriage, she lived down near the central part of New York. She married a very rich man, and she out-lived him and married a second rich man. I don't know so much about her wedding there.

But we did have other entertainment in the home. The home was, as I say, the principle thing in your life, if you had a good home. Now, what did we do in the evenings? We had games, to begin with, when I was real small. It was before the time of radios, before the time of the phonographs or gramophone, as some of them used to call them. But we did have one thing: plenty of cards were played in the house. Not for money! You never played in our house for any money and we never played on Sunday, but in the evenings, Saturday evenings, we used to play. Usually it was Pedro, a game that four could play, or six could play. If you played four, you had a partner, and if you played six, you had two partners. They used to play one set against the other. I learned to play Pedro when I was real young because Father and Mother and Florence and I were four of us. We could have a game of cards anytime we wanted to! But usually we had a man working here, a hired man. Father had a big farm and sometimes a hired girl, or someone, would come in and then we would have six-handed Pedro which was much more fun!

Now we wouldn't think of having a game of cards, ending at 9 o'clock, unless we had a pan of apples. Usually I was sent down to get a milk pan, or a pan of 8 or 10 inches, an old milk pan. We'd bring it up and wash those apples. We didn't bring up (just) one kind of apple. We had four or five kinds of apples! We had Baldwins, and we had Greenings, we had Kings, and we had Swars, and we had Russets to eat. They would pass these around and you could get any kind of apple you wanted out of the pan. We used to go to the neighbors because maybe they had some kind of apples that we didn't have. Then if it was early fall, or early winter, or late fall, after the cider came, We always had apples and cider until the cider got a little bit hard; then they wouldn't bring it up and serve it.

Besides that, we had card parties where a whole neighborhood, or half the neighborhood, would come and play cards some evenings. That was what they called a Card Party, and maybe they would set up five or six little tables and they would play cards and sometimes they would play what they called Progressive Pedro where you would start maybe at the

bottom or half way up and as you won you moved up one table until you arrived to the top table. Then at the top table, if you lost, you went to the bottom and started over again.

Then we had dancing. In the old times the country people were very fond of dancing. We used to have enough music in the neighborhood usually, to have a dance, Cal Warn, who lived the next place east of us -- that was Mrs. Warn's husband, used to play the bass viola, and he used to "call off". If he couldn't "call off", Mrs. Warn could; so she would rest him once in a while. Then of course, they had usually someone with a violin. Frank Lund used to play quite a lot and it was funny: he was left-handed and it seemed as if he did it pretty awkward, but he could play! Sometimes they used to hire someone to come in.

But I couldn't hardly stop without telling about one neighbor here: he was a common farmer and he was a hard-working man, George Snow. He could play the piano! Snow could play classical music, or he could play instrumental and dancing music, Scottish or Jigs, or things like that. He never had a sheet of music in front of him, he could just play! You could tell him what you wanted, and he'd play it. He was the one we "fell back on" a great many times to furnish us music.

A Did your mother have anyone to help her in the home? Did she have a hired girl?

P Yes she did a lot of the time. We used to have a (hired) man all the year around, even in the winter. We had quite a lot of stock and we had a hired man here all the while in the winter. But in the winter we seldom had a hired girl. Forence (my sister) grew up and she did part of the work. But in the summertime, when we had extra men besides the one man, why then we used to have a hired girl and she would work here. She worked until the apple season was over because then we used to board the extra help. If the extra man lived close by, we gave him his noon dinner and usually at night. Otherwise the single men probably were tramps. They came here and worked by the month and stayed

in our house all the while.

A Was the hired girl-- might she be someone from the neighborhood?

P Yes, usually a neighborhood girl.

A Did they ever hire any from the Albion State School?

P No. I can remember the Plummer girl here, and they had one named Pasel that worked here. Usually it was a country girl from around here because they knew the country life and country work.

A Were all homes as happy as yours?

P Well, I don't know as I can say.

A What I mean is, were there any broken homes?

P Very few of them. I don't remember any time when a woman left her husband, or a husband left his wife and children within a mile or two. Not in this neighborhood.

A What would have happened to the children? Would they have stayed with the mother?

P They probably would have stayed with the mother, whoever furnished the home. If it was a man and a farmer, she might have gone back to her folks and taken the children. He would "bach it" as we used to call it: "he's baching it now". Usually man and wife couples stuck together. It was the case in those days "for better or for worse" when you married.

A Were there orphanages? If there were a disaster in the family and both parents happened to be killed -- would there have been ^{an} Orphanage that they could have gone to?

P Not that I can remember. There was no Orphanage, or no deaths where it took both the father and mother away. Usually if the mother died, the man took them and he either hired someone to come in to cook for them and he would stay right there with the children. Or in the case where they had too many (children), sometimes the younger, if they had a baby, one of the grandmothers would take the baby. But if the children were big enough to run around and take care of themselves, he would get a housekeeper to come in and take charge until he married again.

Now I can go on a little bit more about the entertainments we had. The entertainments we had in here seemed to me to be the kind that I would like to listen to today. Always in a neighborhood there was all kinds of people. Some could play the piano, and some were very good talkers, and all of them were very good listeners.

Father had traveled quite a little: he'd traveled in Canada and Michigan and Chicago and all around. In fact, Father was more of a dealer than he was a farmer because he could hire a man who could carry on at the farm under his directions and he (Father) would go to Michigan and buy cattle and sheep. But I want to tell you, Father was a good story teller; also Jen Stanley. Jennie, but we always called her "Jen", Jen Stanley lived near here, just west on the south side in the stone house where the Smiths live today. She was a "clipper" to tell stories. She was a woman of not very good health, but she always felt better when a party came. She was always able to go to the parties.

I want to tell you a story or two that came from these old party story tellings. I'll tell you the story about Fred Pickett.

Fred Pickett was an Englishman who lived down on the Kenyonville Road and he'd saved a little money and got his home paid for. It made him feel good and he thought he was in the top bracket all the while because he had a home and it was paid for, which was good for a man who had come over seas. Now Mr. Pickett and Father had a little disagreement. He was mad at Father and he said, "Mr. Pratt, if you ever died I'd still be so mad that I wouldn't go to your funeral". Now Father said, "Mr. Pickett, I don't feel like that at all about you. If you died, I'd be happy to go to your funeral!"

I had an uncle down at the Two Bridges; nobody that you folks remember because he died in 1901. He lived to be an old man, and he was one of those who came in here at two years old. His father came with an ox team from the eastern part of New York. He grew up here and obtained a little education, taught school, owned a farm, and he kept buying farms and became fairly well-to-do. He owned a farm down at



Two Bridges. He was a rather slow talking man and people would listen because they knew that he had something important to say. When he got old and didn't farm it anymore he dealt in farms and land, buying them and selling them as he gathered money. He'd buy a farm cheap and sell it to somebody. If the buyer was a good worker, he would start him in farming. The buyer would pay him interest maybe for 10 or 20 years on that farm. Uncle John, he was really my Great-Uncle but we always called him Uncle John, When he grew old he had an Irishman working for him who did most of the farm work. He kept sheep and he had, at one time, quite a flock of sheep. At one time he had them on the barn floor.

They were sorting the mother sheep from the lambs. They were going to wean the lambs. They drove them all in on the barn floor and shut the doors. They had nearly 100 in there. They used to take and catch the lambs and throw them out into the barnyard. When they sorted the lambs all out they intended to take them and drive them over to a distant lot where the old sheep could not hear them bleating, and keep them in there. Then (they'd) drive the sheep somewhere else and separate the lambs from the sheep. As they were sorting the sheep, there was a couple of men in the barn putting the lambs out. Uncle John went out there to the barn to see how they were doing. He stood in the door where they put the lambs through, leading to the barn yard. Uncle left a crack in the door and Pat, the Irishman, said, "Mr. Pratt, come in and shut the door. They'll be getting out". Uncle John said, "No, I will see that they don't get out". Everything went all right for two or three minutes when finally one of those old sheep that had lost her lamb saw the light in the door. She made a bolt and she went right between Uncle's legs !! This opened the door and the sheep all ran out and mixed in with the lambs again. My Uncle was knocked right over on his back, out in the sheep manure, and the sheep ran over him!! They cut his face and his face bled. He got up on his feet, and Pat (the Irishman) looked at him and said, "Now, you damned old fool, you see what you've done?!"

Uncle never said a word. He turned and went into the house, without saying one word. When he got in there his wife, Hannah, saw him as he came in. His face was all blood and he was all sheep manure. She said, "John, what's the matter? What's the matter?" He didn't say anything for a minute or two. Then he spoke up:

"Hannah, Patrick says 'I'm a damned-ol-fool!' Patrick is right!! "

There's many other things the old house had which are not so important today. Many of us, in the old houses like this, once had cisterns that furnished us with the soft water. You had the hard water, or the drinking water coming from the well on the outside of the house and carried in by pails, usually by the boy if they had one. The cistern was down below in part of the cellar, and the water from the eaves-troughs run down into the cistern. The (cistern) walls were plastered up and held the water. With a hand pump you would soon have cistern water. That cistern water was soft water and it took less soap. It was good to wash clothes and dishes in. We always had a good supply of soft water. We had another pail for the drinking water which we put in the tea kettle to make our tea, and to cook our meats, and things like that. So the cistern was really important because we had no electricity to pump the water into the house as it is done today.

A You said it was put in the tea kettle to boil the water. What did you heat the water on?

P We heated the water on the cook stove which was usually fired by wood. Sometimes in the winter we had coal but in the summertime, it was always wood. You had the amount of fire according to the fire you kept in there.

A Then how did you heat the rain-water?

P On the back of the cook-stove there was a reservoir, on the stove. We used to fill that. It was "yours truly's" job part of the time to keep that rain-water tank filled in the stove, and then you had warm water to wash the dishes with.

Also the tea kettle was kept filled. That was one of the things that Mother said, "Never forget your tea kettle. Always have some water in your tea kettle".

A Did they ever use the cistern to prevent a fire?

P No, we seldom had a fire. We used to use the well-water for outside watering. Our well water was right at the corner of the house and so it was handier.

Something else that was connected pretty close to the house and it was the old toilet. Most of them had a little house in the back yard, either or two or three hole toilets. Usually with the door facing away from the road. But we had one woman who wanted the door to face the road so she could see who was going by. Our toilet held on until the time that we had water pumped into the house and then we could have water pressure and have a toilet inside. That didn't come until electricity came along, a good many years later.

A What did you use for toilet paper?

P Usually some thin paper, if we had it. Tissue paper if we had it, or thin newspaper would do the job.

A Did you ever use a Sears and Roebuck Catalog?

P Yes, that was a good thing. Probably lots of them (Sears catalogues) went out of this world through the toilets.

Many were the journeys you made at night while it was cold, in the winter-time. Ours was quite a ways out and you would take a lantern out there and sit up against the west wind.

Then we would have barber shops in our home too, because Mother and Father always cut our hair. Father would cut my hair sometimes, and sometimes Mother would cut it. But then when Father needed his hair cut, it was up to Mother to cut it. And that's the way we got through.

We had no movies at this time but we did have piano music. My sister (Florence) learned to play the piano. She became quite an artist on a piano and she furnished us with music. If we had time we would have a little of that music evenings. No silent movies. They did have early phonographs. Phonographs they used to call them -- on round cylinders. Mr. Warn, our neighbor next door, was the first one that had one. He had

as many as 100 records and he would bring them up and we would have music from them. That was our first music. Of course in later times it developed and they had the early radio.

I can remember the first radio I ever had here, or the first one that I had was what they called a Crystal Set. You'd put the receiver up to your ear and you would put a little wire on this chunk of crystal. If you got everything to work just right, you would hear from far away places. I can remember hearing Madam Schumanhike on one of the very first radios. She was a noted German singer, and she sang over a station from Pittsburg. We could get that station over the radio. Later they developed the radio and we bought a bigger one where you had a horn and you could listen without ear-phones. Those are some of the things we've grown in to. We have found things developing all through my life, especially in the electric visions of the future.

The small stores. We did not have too many store around here. We went to Eagle Harbor and traded at a country store there a great deal. Sometimes we went to Albion. I can remember when the A & P (grocery) first started in Albion, on East Bank Street on the north side in a store that was very small; probably 20 feet wide and 30 feet long would be the size of the A & P Store. That turned later into the chain stores. They kept moving and getting larger stores and developing different parts of the store. (NOTE: See transcript of Curtis Conner, re.: A & P stores, Albion).

In the olden times if you wanted any meat, you went into a different store and there they would cut you off the meat. Sometimes they would go into the cold room and bring out a quarter of beef and cut off whatever you wanted. They had a big block and lay (the meat) there and sawed it off. You could buy the beef any size you wanted; a roast, or they would cut off a steak.

Father had quite a lot of cattle and he always used to have cattle killed in the fall. We had a slaughter house here and I could tell you a lot about that. When the cold weather came, there was a beef animal killed and placed in the barn. We had meat, and our meat market was in the drive-barn because the meat would freeze up and I could go out there with a saw and saw off a steak, or something to bake or boil.

A In the stores, how did they keep the room cold?

P They had ice, chunks of ice in the cooler. They had an ice-house somewheres and put in great big squares of ice; sometimes they'd be two feet long and a foot thick and two feet wide. They would have eight or ten of those cakes (of ice) in (the cooler room) to keep the air cold, and that would keep the meat.

We did have windmills in those olden times. We did not have a wind-mill but some of the neighbors did. Up the road, my Aunt and Uncle had a wind-mill and when I was real small they pumped water into the house from the well. They had a great big tank in the kitchen that you could almost go swimming in! Probably it would hold 500 gallons of water, and the water was pumped into the cistern while it was cold from the well. Then it ran from there by gravity out into the barn and ran where the cattle could get the water.

We had no broom makers (around here). The broom makers had vanished from this part of the country when I was a boy but they used to come through here at different times in the summertime with a whole little wagon, or a double surrey-like wagon selling brooms.

We also had tin peddlers coming here with their wagon. We had grocery peddlers.

And of course we had Gypsies coming through here. I was always afraid of the Gypsies. Someone had told me that they stole little boys and carried them off; and that caused me to go where I couldn't be seen. But I later found that the Gypsies didn't do that. They came along and wanted to

tell your fortune and steal the silver from your table, if they could. If they got a chance they would tell your fortune for a quarter, and probably steal half a dollar's worth.

A Mr. Pratt, you were going to say something about the peddlers, the rag peddlers.

P Yes, in those olden days we had many rag peddlers, or rag pickers. They weren't pickers, they were peddlers. They bought your rags. They would pay you money only if you would not accept fruit or some other small thing in pay. They hated to give out the money, so usually they got it by so much for the rags and "now I'll sell you so much fruit", or other little good-for-nothing things that they had. I can remember Mother taking pineapple, especially, because the pineapple was hard to get and they very seldom had any in the stores. So she used to take the rag money and trade for -- maybe tin-ware, or pineapples, or something like that.

Other things we had to buy and sell in some different ways. We knew what it was to barter ; that is to trade our eggs for our groceries, or trade our eggs with a man that furnished the meat. The meat peddler would come along and he would take eggs usually.

Another thing that you are missing today is the fly-stickers. We used to have lots of flies, ten times as many as you have today. We used to drive them out the kitchen. Then Mother would darken the room and put a cheese-cloth over the dining room table, and the butter was taken downstairs ,and the flies driven out and then the room darkened. Then the flies won't come in again. If it's a dark room, they won't come in very much, and that's the way we got rid of them. But then we did have those that came in when you opened the room for noon or for night. We used to have fly stickers which was little pieces of paper about two or three inches wide and probably three feet long, or four. The stickers were all rolled up and when you got them, you would pull them out. It looked like molasses -- sticky stuff sweetened because flies like sugar. They had other fly stickers to be placed over the table. The flies would fly around them and get caught in them. When the thing got full why you would throw it out, burn it, and put some more fresh

fly paper up. Another thing that they had was poison for flies which they used to have in a shallow dish. It was sweetened with sugar and the flies would get in there to eat the sugar, and then die. Syrup would always attract flies and they would get some of the poison and die that way.

There was an old man living over near Albion, just west of Albion where the Eagle Harbor Road strikes the Canal and bends south; old Mike Dolin used to live there. He used to come along about once a month, and he was a tin-peddler. He had all kinds of tin ware to sell. He was a sharp old Irishman and used to open up the doors and show all his things. Usually Mother went out and usually bought things of Mr. Dolin. You would hear him coming with his bell. He would ring a bell before he got to your house and when he got up to the house and the horse would stop, he would ring the bell just a little until you came out. Then he would sell you whatever you wanted in tin-ware. Mother used to buy pan, milk pans, and little tin dishes, and things of him. Then he used to go to the house across the road.

A Did he used to sharpen shears too?

P I don't remember that he did. There were people that come along and sharpened all kinds of shears and things. I remember one of them came along, but not very often and he had sort of a wheel-barrow. He had a grind stone in that wheel-barrow and he would set it down and turn the grinder, and sharpen your shears.

Then we had the grocery peddlers. We had several grocery peddlers but the one we traded the most with was Walters Brothers of Eagle Harbor. (NOTE: See Clyde Walters transcript). They had a two horse team and usually there would be two of them on the wagon. Leon Walters was a boy of about my age or a little bit younger, and he used to come along and drive the horses for his Uncle Will Walters. They used to have all kinds of groceries. They would buy eggs. They came along here late in the afternoon. He'd made quite a big circle and he was headed back towards Eagle Harbor when he got here. I can remember carrying out baskets of eggs: 2-3-4-5 dozen of eggs. We would take the eggs out there and Mother would buy

groceries. If they didn't come out even, why he ^{THE} (peddler) would put it down on the book that we owed him, ~~or that we owed him~~. In the fall sometimes when the apple pickers came and we got lots of groceries, we used to get behind and Father went over there afterwards, after the apple pickers had finished, and maybe we'd have a grocery bill of \$50.00. That would be for all summer though.

They would also take butter, if you made good butter, he would buy the butter. Or he would sell butter if you were out of butter. He had everything! Spools and needles and things like that; sugar, spices, anything to sell. But sometimes he was nearly closed out by the time he got here and we couldn't get everything, sometimes.

A Did you ever go trapping, Mr. Pratt?

P Yes, I was a trapper when I was young because pennies was scarce and any way to get a little money. Father didn't give me a great deal of money for my work. Probably I ate more than my work was worth anyway, so I became a trapper. I never hunted with a gun and shot too many things, but I did trap. When the fall came on we'd say, "The fur isn't good until there's an R in the month's name". So in September, the later part of September, and get into October when the weather was colder, then the fur was thicker and it was worth more. (NOTE: See William Gill transcript). I used to trap muskrat and it was worth more. I used to trap muskrat a great deal over at the creek, just south of us. I used to have maybe two dozen traps strung out there. Every day I would go through the trap line early in the morning, just about daylight to look at the traps. I would set the stake out in the water and usually the muskrats would drown themselves. If they wasn't (dead) then I would have to kill them with a stick. And then, I would come home sometimes without any, and sometimes I would have two or three. Then I had the fun of -- or the work of -- skinning them. We used to cut from the two hind legs back across them and pull the hair, the hide, down towards their head, and skin as we

went on down. That gave us a rectangular shape pelt of muskrat hide. Then we had a pointed board usually made out of a thin board, a half inch board, or less; it was narrowed down to near a point on one end and then it gradually widened as it went back-- 'till it got in back of the front legs, and then it was nearly parallel. They were anywheres from four to six inches wide, according to the size of the muskrat. Then after a while when I got the rats pretty well cleaned up over on the creek, I used to hunt skunks and that was quite a thing. But I got so I could tell pretty near where the skunks lived. Then if anyone had a dead hen anywheres around, I used to hunt out the neighbors dead hens and take and cut them in two and use them for bait to catch the skunks. How to catch the skunk and dispatch his life before he gave you a "shot" was a big trick. Usually they were caught in holes, or near a hole, and they'd be in that hole and when you pulled them, they would come out head first. That was the time you had the stick all poised and ready. When you saw his head out, that stick must drop down and kill him or make him senseless before the hind parts come out because that's the time that he's going to plaster you. When the skunk came out he throws his tail up over his back, and you better take to the woods!

A Did you ever get sprayed?

P Oh yes. Lots of times. I got sprayed more than once. Then the folks would know when I got near home for they would smell me before they saw me! The skunks were very common at times. I went out in the front yard one fall morning and I wasn't hunting skunks then. Right out here in the front yard, right here, between here and the road, I met two skunks. They're not afraid of people. They'll come right up to you. The value of skunks depend on how much black was on them. If there was not hardly any white or if there was just a little star of white on the head and the rest of them was black, they would bring top price. They would be worth anywheres from \$2.50 to \$3.00 in those olden times. And if they had a wide strip of white down from their head to the back end they wouldn't be worth more than -- less than one dollar. Seventy-five cents sometimes.

A After you stretched the (animal) hide on the board, what did you do with it?

P We would tack it on the board so it would harden. After a while the fat was all taken off from the hide and the hide would dry down. After a while it would get so dry that it would pull off from the board and it wouldn't shrink at all; it would stay right in the same shape.... Like an envelope pointed down like this. (demonstrates) Here would be his head. The pelt would stay in the right shape, just like an empty envelope.

A Then what would you do with them?

P When we got quite a few hides of the rats and the skunk --- and, oh, once I caught a mink!

Now the mink is a small animal and they are hard to catch. They are very scarce and they are just foxy. I set (traps) for what I thought was going to be a muskrat, and a mink traveled overland quite a ways, a quarter of a mile, or half a mile, and came into the trap. I caught him and he was worth ten dollars; and I thought that was a big thing! He was a nice good size mink and they were very high (priced) at that time. I have gathered quite a few dollars in the fall and you could also trap again in the spring.

~~When~~ You had quite a number of skins, probably mixed ones. Sometimes we'd catch a coon but the coon skins weren't quite as pricey; they didn't bring quite so much. They were what we called "open skinned". We never put those on a stretcher. We opened them up through the belly and there would be a flat skin. We nailed it on the barn or something and dried it out, and we'd sell it. Then a dealer would come along and he would offer you so much for your rats, and so much for the mink, and so much for the skunks, and the other pelts, and things like that. He would grade them. Usually the fall rats were cheap: 10¢, 12¢ or 15¢ for the fall rats. In the spring they would be worth more. Those same rats in the spring would be worth 20¢ to 25¢. The skunk did not change as much as the rats.

I never caught any foxes. They were too foxy for me. (laughter). I saw them but we never caught any.

off without you and you'll be 150 miles from the (tour) bus.

They have a great many places of beauty in Ireland and especially in the western part near where we landed in Shannon. We went south from Shannon, down to several little villages. Well, first we went north to Galway and we was there a little while; and then we went on to Connemara. But these are only names to you. Connemara is where they make a great many rings, jewelry of all kinds, from the stones that they find and grind there. The better part of Ireland to visit is around Killarney. Many songs are of Killarney and we were there, I think, three days. And then you go from Killarney around Dingle Bay one day and you'll go up one side of the Bay and down the other. As I went along Dingle Bay I thought I was nearer Heaven than I ever was or will be! We was above Dingle Bay and ~~xx~~ we looked down onto the water about a hundred feet below us. The water from the Atlantic was coming in there, blue, and breaking on the shore, with the mountains behind us. Back of me was one of the Irish statues with four or five figures in front of the Cross. Back of me was a little place to pray. It seems as though that I was as near Heaven as I expected to be. Then you come back and you stay in Killarney all night.

I will have to tell you the first time that I went over to Ireland. I went on the tour and I was all alone. I went alone. I didn't know much about the tour. Usually there is two that go together; they won't go alone, they'll have someone they know to talk to. I was just ignorant enough to go alone. There was nobody in the group from New York State except a lady from New York City. I knew nobody in the party. I got on board and there were 45 -- 44 other people and myself made 45. They were from California, Florida, a lot of them were from the New England states, and this woman from New York. I was a perfect stranger to everyone of them.

In the first two days I learned that I was kind of a little puppy running behind, and there wasn't anybody paying much attention to me. They didn't know me, or anything. So I made up my mind; I said, "Well, I know how to break the ice".

A Will you tell us again, Mr. Pratt, how old you are?

P This month I am 91 years old.

A I understand that you have done a lot of traveling?

P Well yes. My wife has been dead eight years, and I couldn't go anywheres because she was an invalid for a number of years. I've always liked to travel. I guess my foot is itchy and so I started traveling after she died. I've been across the water - or across the ocean - six times in the last seven years. I didn't go one year back, and I didn't go this year. But if the Lord's willing and gives me the strength I'm going next year again and I'll probably go to Ireland for most of my stay.

A Now, why do you like Ireland?

P Well I like Ireland better than I do England because the people of Ireland are much more cordial. They're your friend right away. They think more of you than the people of England do. The people of England - the few of them can't forget that we beat them in war twice, and they don't like "Bloody Americans" over there. So I like the Irish better. They are easier to talk to. They will go out of their way to do things for you. I fell in love with Ireland when -- you ask a man how far it was down to a certain church, which you wanted to go to. He says, "Oh sure, I'll go that way me-self and show you". (Mr. Pratt has the ability to suddenly speak with an Irish accent). And he will go out of his way to show you where to go. It's easy to get along in Ireland.

A Where were some of the places that you visited?

P Well, I've been nearly all over Ireland. The first time I went there we landed at Shannon, on a tour. They have it all planned out to where you stay each night and where you will go from place to place. It's a good way -- The first time you go over across -- is to go on a tour because your time is all used to good advantage, and you can go just where you see the most. However, you can not stay as long as you want to. If you are very fond of some Irish girl or man, you can't stay there because the next day the bus will take

So I made up my plan and I told the Guide, "The next morning we start out about 9 to 9:30. When you get out there, loading the bus, I will be the last one out there. I'm going to linger behind but don't worry. I'll come out there. I want everybody on the bus when I get on the bus."

So, before I went out (the next morning) I did a little changing: I took off my glasses and I got a Bandaid that I was carrying and I put it over one of my eyes like it was hurt. I took an old green cap that I hadn't been wearing and I put that on. When they all got on our chartered bus -- it was just outside the hotel a little ways -- I stumbled out there and as I went up the steps of the bus, I made a lot of noise as if I was drunk and stumbling up. When I got inside (the bus) I looked around and I said.....

(NOTE: At this point, J. Howard Pratt sings the Irish song THE WEARING OF THE GREEN... 'Oh Paddy dear, and did ye hear the news that's goin' round'.... etc). And I staggered down between the seats. My seat happened to be almost in the back (of the bus). As I went down, I would look up in their faces and stagger, and then I would go to the other side and look up into their faces -- the faces of those there. (NOTE: J. Howard Pratt now sings the second verse of THE WEARING OF THE GREEN). Before I sat down, I turned to two ladies over on the other side. I had been out with these ladies the night before. They were Italians from Connecticut. I had gotten a little bit acquainted with them and then I said (NOTE: Mr. Pratt again uses an excellent Irish dialect here). "And sure, I wouldn't have got home at-tall, at-tall if it hadn't been for two good lookin' women who took me by the arm and led me home". They hadn't done that -- but did their faces get red!! (laughter). Then I looked around and I took off my cap, took off the bandage from my eye, and sat down. The woman in the seat in front of me said, "I didn't know you! And I told my husband 'If he's a pan-handler, don't give him anything.' "

And after that, everyone knew me. At the table in the morning for breakfast they would say, "Hey Pratt, come over here and eat breakfast with us!" After that I was acquainted with everybody -- just by doing that trick.

A Did you always stay in hotels?

P Yes, we did. The first two times I went I always stayed in hotels. Some of them were nice hotels. The Great Southern Hotel in Killarney, we were in there and that's one of the best hotels. It's probably the biggest and probably the best, and oldest. We stayed in some of the best hotels in London. In Edinburgh -- I never was in a hotel like that in all my life ! It had only been open two months -- New! Everything was so new there, in Edinburgh. They took us to good hotels. When the day's trip was over, there was a hotel to stay overnight. You would get your supper or dinner and overnight lodging and your breakfast for \$20.00 to \$25.00. I figured it out for about half of the above figures. They were nice hotels, yes.

But when I went on my own, I went a different way. I went to Bed and Breakfast.

A What does that mean?

P Bed and Breakfast means usually people are on their own. You go where ever you want to. The second time I was over to Ireland I stayed a week after the rest of the crew came home. The other 44 came home and I stayed right there in Ireland and came home the next week, when they were taking the next group home. That gave me a week, and then I learned to go over for Bed and Breakfast.

You go down the street near the station and you'd see a little sign: Bed and Breakfast, or B and B . That means they will give you a bed and a breakfast.

A In a private home?

P Yes, in a private home ; they're all private homes. You look for them in the private homes and then you can go in there and ask them, "Have you got a room for one?" "Well, I've got one single," or maybe, "I haven't got any". And you go to the next door down the street someplace and you'll find one. That's the Bed and Breakfast system. And they don't cost too much, in our money that means. Probably they are up a little bit now. It was anywheres from \$3.50 to \$5.00 for your Bed and Breakfast. And they are nice. They're clean and you get a good breakfast and the food is cooked well. You get the cooking that the regular Irish have, and not

the extra things that you get in the plush hotels.

A Mr. Pratt, when I first met you I was a girl of about 12 who's name was Ruth Thaine (now Ruth T. Applegate), and I met you at Eagle Harbor School -- country school. I was in the 7th grade. I had you in 7th and 8th grades. Do you remember?

P Yes, I remember you in the 7th grade there. At that time I was teaching the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades and I remember you very plainly. You was a nice little girl and you and some of my older scholars were getting ready to take some of the Regents (examinations) to enter High School. I think probably I passed you, or got you through the things and into High School. Any other things that you remember about going to school to me at Eagle Harbor?

A Well, I remember -- now in my 8th grade I had to go over to High School to take Regents and you prepared me very well to do the Regents. And I took arithmetic, reading, English, geography, spelling; and then in 8th grade you always gave us a little bit more. We had about a half year of algebra in our 8th grade.

P Yes, I prepared them because it's a big jump from arithmetic to algebra, and it's hard if they don't prepare you.

When I started in algebra, the class had been in session three weeks and I was way behind. I didn't know beans about it, and the teacher said I didn't know anything about it. I had hard work staying in the class. And I said that my pupils are never going to get into trouble like that. So I started them in very slowly and it made it a lot easier for algebra; taking up algebra in High School.

A It surely did. I know algebra was easy for me, and it was from the start I got with you. I remember one time hearing you say you "had 100 per cent passing," and it never dawned on me until later years that certainly you had 100 % passing -- because I was the only one you had to take the Regents!!

Now, thank you very much Mr. Pratt for this interview. It's been delightful. And don't pull any tricks.. like going up on the roof and falling off again! (See newspaper clips)

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The interview was conducted at Mr. Pratt's home on the Ridge Road by Mrs. Ruth T. Applegate.

Also present during the interview was Helen McAllister.

The tapes were translated by Lysbeth Hoffman of Lakeside, N.Y. After several additions and several deletions by J. Howard Pratt, the final typing was done by Mrs. McAllister.



AUTHORS HONORED--State Assemblyman R. Stephen Hawley, during a meeting Saturday of the Orleans County Historical Association, surprised two local authors by honoring them with Legislative resolutions. J. Howard Pratt was honored for his book, "Life on the Ridge," and Irene Gibson was presented a resolution for "Historic Sites in Orleans County, N.Y." Some 60 people gathered at the West Barre Methodist Church for the meeting, and represented were the county association, Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of American Colonists, the Cobblestone Society, the historical societies for Medina and Yates, the county Historical Monument Corp. and county Historian C.W. Lattin.

J-A

9-23-1980