

~~~~~

~~~~~



## Father and Mother

---

My father and mother met at a horse race in Lexington. Both were enthusiastic horseback riders and had many other interests in common. They soon became engaged and on October 11, 1882 were married in the old Unitarian church in Belmont.

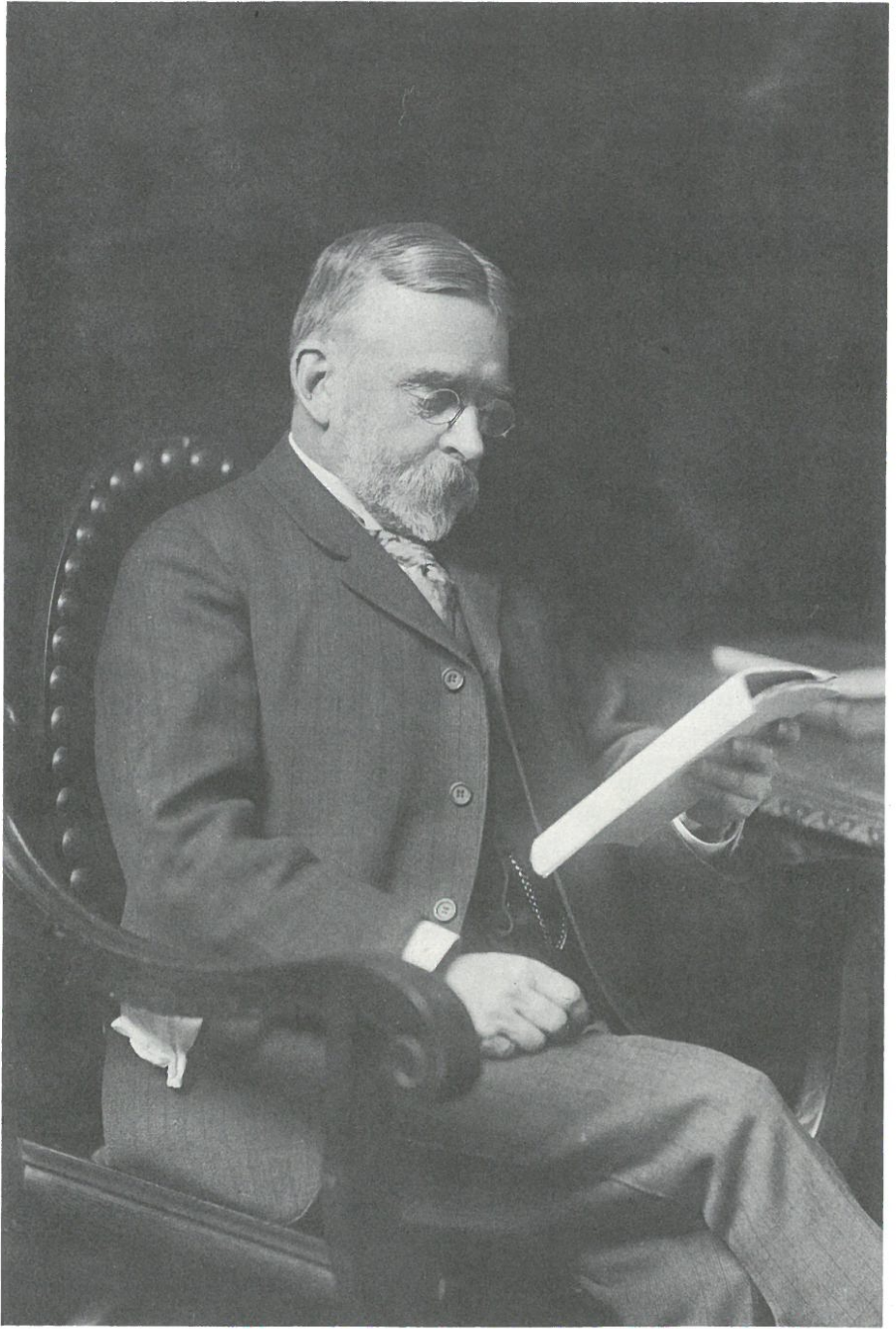
Before his marriage my father bought the Ware house on the property which is now 580 Concord Avenue. This house became their permanent home for the rest of their lives. My grandmother Atkins bought and gave them the land on top of the hill above the house and later they purchased the property across the street, formerly known as Holiday Farm. Some years later, my father and Mr. H. O. Underwood bought the large tract of land belonging to the Crawford Farm. The land on the Waverley side of Concord Avenue was given to the McLean Hospital. The land on the other side of the street was made into a nine-hole golf links.

In the winter of 1883 Father took Mother to Cuba, returning to Belmont in the spring. They lived with the Torriente family in Cienfuegos, where my father had stayed every winter since 1869. There my mother found life very different from New York or a New England town. However, she had lots of courage and energy, and quickly adapted herself to new ways.

After two winters in Cienfuegos my parents went to live at Soledad, a sugar plantation which had been recently taken over by E. Atkins & Co. The story of the development of Soledad has been told by my father in "Sixty Years in Cuba." My mother's diary tells of their arrival in Cienfuegos:

"We were met at the depot by a lot of people to whom I was introduced. Such a party as was waiting for us here, — all the Torriente family, it appeared to me. As most of them spoke only Spanish, conversation was not animated between us.

"We were taken directly to the Torriente house, a typical Spanish two-story cement house with a flat roof built around a patio. A winding staircase led to our rooms on the second floor.



EDWIN F. ATKINS



KATHARINE W. ATKINS



"They have arranged our rooms in great style for Cuba. Such gorgeousness in the way of beds I never saw. My bedstead is gilded and Ned's is partly black, and the curtains of both tied back with broad, blue satin ribbon, the curtains themselves being muslin and lace. The bedclothes are embroidered and there is a broad flounce all around them with a deep insertion of drawnwork edged with lace. The pillows are more like bolsters than pillows and their coverings are also finished in the same manner, and so are the towels. The beds are not as uncomfortable as one might suppose. I couldn't imagine that sleeping on a piece of canvas stretched tight over the bed would be very agreeable, so I was surprised to find that I was quite comfortable. Would I were fatter, though, — my bones are too near the surface. It required a great deal of twisting before I could arrange myself so that I was not supporting my weight on a bone."

The following is from an account Mother wrote in later years:

"I never knew kinder people than the Torriente family. All they had was at my disposal. The elder Mrs. Torriente was a widow and the household consisted of herself, her married daughter and her husband and a niece. Their table was elastic, they did not entertain but people of all sorts drifted in to meals. On Tuesdays, which was the day for alms giving, a wail that sounded as I should imagine the wailing wall of Jerusalem sounded, arose from below. There was a constant procession of young negro girls going down the stairs with alms or food.

"There were two rows of rocking chairs facing each other with a rug between at one end of the dining room and there the family entertained their callers, who, it seemed to me, made interminable calls telling all the gossip of the town. Sometimes some old servant from the family plantation would come in and seat herself on the floor by one of the chairs and proceed to give her old mistress all the news.

"The house served as a coach house, too, for the big volante (carriage) was kept in the vestibule. A friend of Mr. Atkins, who lived in the lower part of our house, had a riding horse brought in for me, and he was kept tethered under a banana tree in the interior court.

"In the mornings a goat clattered cheerfully up the stairs to be milked at Clotilde Torriente's bedside, for she had been ordered to take goat's milk and that was the way the family took to protect themselves against germs. The cows, too, were driven about the streets and milked



ATKINS HOUSE, 580 CONCORD AVENUE  
1882

at the doors. It was bad for the cows, but at any rate the milk was not watered.

"The chain gang swept the streets and gathered the garbage at night. I think I must have been mistaken about their sweeping the streets, — I never saw any evidence of their being swept. The sidewalks were very narrow and the open sewers ran along in the gutters. You had to pick your way very carefully. As you passed the schoolhouses, you always heard a loud sound of voices. It was not recitations, — the pupils all studied aloud.

"Life in Cienfuegos in a Spanish family couldn't be called exactly gay. The Spaniards and Cubans were rather sharply divided socially, and living in a Spanish family, I naturally saw more of them, though my more intimate friends of my own age were Cubans.

"In those days no woman ever went out into the streets alone. Indeed some of them never went out at all. Of course I had to spend a good deal of time in the house. The married daughter taught me all the different drawnwork stitches. She made the household supply of linen towels and also embroidered all the pillow cases and linen sheets. She was very devout and a little room next her bedroom contained two or three shrines elaborately adorned after the fashion of Latin countries and with tapers burning before each one.

"All the houses had courtyards and there was no glass in the windows, so when you had light you had air. Many of the rooms had no windows, only doors opening out into the inside courts, and other doors opening onto a covered gallery.

"Next door in a tumbledown house, a man kept fighting cocks and there was always plenty of noise there in the early morning. The city was a mixture of rather fine houses and tumbledown huts, often side by side. The little cafes were rather picturesque, especially when the bull fighters came to town and sat in them drinking chocolate or coffee and rolling cigarettes. Once the Spanish students were in Cienfuegos for a visit and walked through the streets in the early morning playing their guitars and singing.

"The Spanish cooking was more to my liking than the Cuban, but both were without many vegetables and with little fruit. Lard was used instead of butter and the pastries and cakes to a northern palate were almost uneatable. Some of the other dishes, too, were almost spoiled by strong Catalan oil and garlic."



Mother's stay in the Torriente house came to an end after two years, when my parents went to live at the Soledad Sugar plantation. Mother wrote of Soledad:

"One might think it would have been a pleasant change to go to a house of one's own in a lovely country, but at first it was a terrifying experience. It sounds poetic to live on a sugar plantation amid waving palms and orange groves, but this idea of a life where you lie in a hammock and have cooling drinks brought you by small negro boys is not a true picture. We were lucky if we were allowed to lie in our beds for eight hours at night. At that time Soledad might have been in the midst of a jungle. It was the only house where white people could stay for miles around and they came often to stay. We sat down at table sixteen and twenty. Of course we did not have enough beds, but when we needed another we sent to the carpenter's shop and had a canvas cot made, and in our store we bought a comforter as a mattress, and a native pillow made of ceiba floss, and with two sheets we supplied them with a bed.

"Housekeeping for twenty with the kind of servants available was not a joy and my Spanish was scarcely equal to the occasion. When they disobeyed orders they always gave as an excuse that they did not understand the Señora.

"The house had been in use for forty years and in the last few years it had been in charge of an old Slaver. The dirt was appalling. I had one room literally excavated. It was an alcove near the kitchen and with picks and shovels the men dug away four or five feet of solid earth before coming to the brick pavement.

"Mr. Sam Eliot, son of President Eliot of Harvard, visited us in those early days. He and another young man were taking a trip after leaving college. I have often wondered what he thought of us, for by the time he came we were rather hardened to our disabilities and had forgotten how queer we must have seemed to a New Englander.

"One of our old slaves came in one day while Mr. Eliot was there, and looking at him admiringly, said to me, Niña, is that God himself?' He certainly was a very good looking young man and I suppose that may have been the old negro's idea of the Lord.

"Our visitors were uncomfortable but they did not complain. The young men all liked riding with a revolver strapped around their waist. The visitors enjoyed the excitement of the approach to the house from





VIVIENDA, SOLEDAD, CUBA

the boat landing on the river. They rode on a flat car with a Spanish soldier with a loaded rifle on each corner. Then the two guards at our front door day and night gave you a delightful sense of something exciting. Personally I couldn't feel we were in much danger, but the guards made a good impression on the visitors."

My parents continued to go every winter to Cuba until we children were born. I had two older brothers and my mother stayed in Belmont with us while my father went to Cuba. This continued until 1906, when we were fairly well grown. Mother then went back to spend winters at Soledad.

During the time he was away from Cuba, Father was active in business in the North. After his father's death he served for twelve years as vice president and member of the Executive Committee of the Union Pacific Railway. He was president of the Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Co. during a short period of reorganization. In 1909 he was again connected with the sugar refining business for he became a director of the American Sugar Refining Co. representing the New England stockholders. He was made vice president and then chairman of the Board, which position he occupied until 1915.

He was also Director of the Second National Bank of Boston and other Boston banks

President of the Boston Wharf Co.

President and Director of the Punta Alegre Sugar Co.

Director of the Guarantee Co. of North America

President of Aetna Mills

In Belmont, Father and Mother were both active in town affairs. They were interested in the Waltham Hospital, where Father was treasurer for some years and Mother was a trustee. They were both members of the Parish Committee of the Unitarian Church. Father was a director of the Belmont Savings Bank. Mother helped to found the Belmont Family Service Society and the Belmont Hospital Aid.

Father founded a botanical garden in Cuba in 1901. Its primary purpose was to do research in the improvement of sugar cane, but he

also got much pleasure from his collection of tropical trees, shrubs and flowers. The Garden was under the direction of Mr. Robert M. Gray. Father transferred the operation of the Garden to Harvard University in 1919, to carry on work in Economic Botany for the benefit of Cuba and the Cubans. In 1951, many years after Father's death, Mother received the Cespedes Medal from the Cuban Government for the work that Father and Mother had done for Cuba.

Six weeks of the summer were spent by the family on Nantucket. The island at that time still retained much of the flavor of old whaling days. Father built a cottage on the beach and the house was an ideal place for a summer vacation.

My parents spent interesting and busy lives between Belmont and Cuba. Father died in 1926. The Sugar Trade Journal said of him:

"Mr. Atkins was considered an expert on sugar conditions in the U.S. as well as throughout Cuba. It was a rare occurrence at a tariff hearing or any other investigation in sugar in the U.S. that Mr. Edwin F. Atkins was not one of the first called upon to testify in connection with the hearing. Mr. Atkins was one of the very few men who had an intimate knowledge of cane growing, manufacture of raw sugar, refining methods, and at the same time was in active touch with the commercial and marketing end of the business."

The Boston News Bureau wrote:

"In the passing of Edwin F. Atkins, Boston loses one of her foremost citizens, a man whose ability and integrity were universally recognized.

"Mr. Atkins' unfailing courtesy and kindness endeared him to those with whom he came in contact. His employees cherished genuine affection for him, and it is safe to assume that the news of his death will be received with a feeling of universal sadness in Cuba."

Mother lived until 1953. How she spent her life after Father's death is signified in a tribute paid to Mother on her 80th birthday:

"No better token of our love and esteem can be expressed for you, Mrs. Katharine W. Atkins, than by joining with every other resident of

Belmont and your hundreds of outside friends and relatives, in this tribute on your 80th birthday, July 11, 1940:

"We have learned that this is your eightieth birthday.

"It must be wonderful to be eighty and to be able to look back over years crowded with kind acts, unfailing charity and understanding public service; to know of all those who are healthy and happy today because of the helping hand you have been ever ready to extend; to know of all the burdens you have lifted from weary shoulders; to know that you have made your worldly wealth a blessing to your town and its people.

"We want you to know that we are happy today because it is your birthday. We want you to know that you have done much to make Belmont the town it is and that Belmont is a better town to live in because it has been your home.

"It is the earnest wish of your Town that there be many more birthdays and many more years of happiness awaiting you."

Sincerely,

Inhabitants of Belmont

By J. WATSON FLETT,

*Chairman of Selectmen*





580 CONCORD AVENUE

# My Childhood

---

I arrived in the world on the morning of Harvard Commencement on June 28, 1894. Our family doctor, Alfred Worcester, was busy with the ceremonies and couldn't be reached, but Miss Annie B. Melick, a young graduate of the Waltham Nurses' Training School was quite adequate to the occasion. After Father paid his first call on me, he mounted his horse for his daily ride and stopped to tell John Leonard, who was haying in a nearby field, that a new baby had arrived and it was a girl.

I began my life in a house which was altered seven times through the years and grew to large proportions. Our household consisted of seven people, my grandmother and aunt, who lived on the third floor, my parents, and we three children.

My earliest recollection is of being left alone in the nursery when my brothers went off to school. I suppose I was about five. This was the time that I turned to the company of my grandmother. She took me up to her room on the third floor every afternoon and taught me to sew and do embroidery. We would sew together until it grew too dark to see and then we would sit at her window overlooking Belmont and identify the glimmer in each neighbor's house as the lights went on. In those days we knew almost all the people in the houses in our neighborhood. After the lights were lighted and it was really dark she would serve me tea at a little table where she kept a collection of beautiful cups. My grandmother always wore black and put on a widow's bonnet with a long black veil when she went out. She was a lively and charming person and I had many good times with her.

Aunt Rita sometimes joined us at tea, for her room was next door to my grandmother's. Her interest was in the Belmont Public Library, where she was a very active member of the Board of Trustees. Our house was filled with books and bookcases were in every room. Aunt Rita always had some wonderful book ready for me to read and knew just what would delight the heart of a little girl.

The wing at the back of the house was occupied by seven ser-

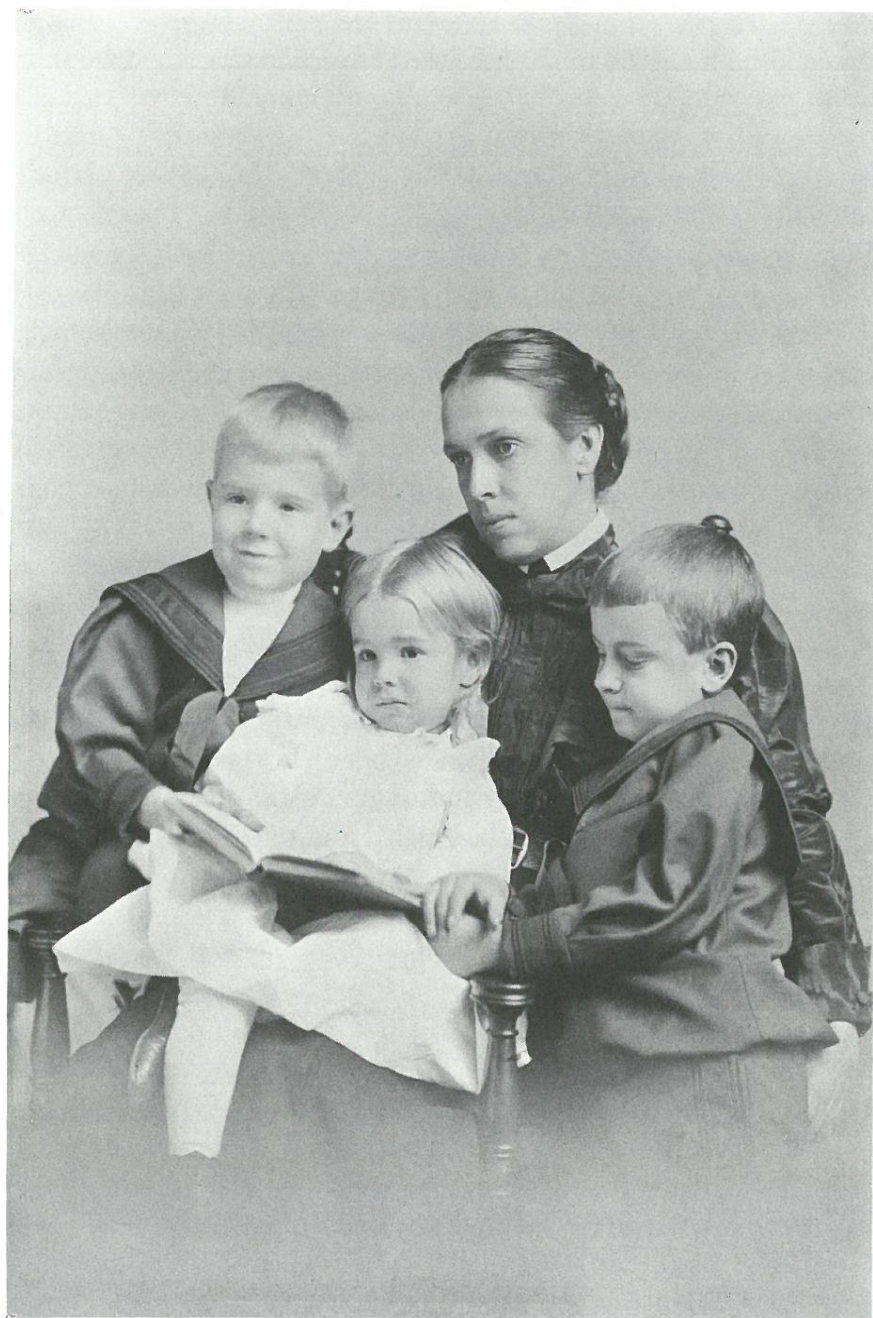


vants, the cook, kitchen maid, laundress, waitress, chambermaid, and two nurses, Katie and Lizzie. I remember Mary Casey, our waitress, caught mumps from me. I got the mumps and was accountable for giving them to forty people, thirty-one at school and nine in our own house. I can see our grandmother now, and we three children, sitting at the dining-room table with our heads done up in flannel, while Mary waited on table with her swollen face wrapped in flannel, too. The mainstay of the kitchen was Rosa Bonner. She was with the family about thirty years. She never got excited about anything and did an immense amount of work.

When I was about six years old, Alma Sahlin entered our lives. She was a Swedish woman, beautifully trained in household work and sewing. She took immediate charge of the house, kept everything under lock and key and doled out supplies to the entire household. She was utterly devoted to my mother and it was her greatest joy to wait on her. Alma knew where everything was in the house and could produce it at a moment's notice. This was saying a good deal, for Mother kept everything imaginable on hand that might be needed by the neighborhood. The number of things produced on request from our attic and barns by the faithful Alma was almost unbelievable.

Father and Mother began their day at six with an early cup of coffee. Mother had all sorts of morning activities, but the one I remember the best was her care of the hens. Mother made a regular early morning trip to the hen house across the street to personally attend to the feed and water and woe to the farmer if the place wasn't clean. She thought one day that the hens were not laying eggs to maximum production, so she decided to run the hen yard herself. Numerous books on hens were collected, incubators and brooders were purchased, and one of the brooders was installed in the guest room, where numbers of baby chicks escaped from their artificial mother and peeped unhappily under the bed. I remember one morning she said she was going to kill every hen that was not off the perch at seven o'clock. Her philosophy for hens was the same as for people, everyone must keep busy.

Father took a horseback ride every morning before breakfast and



MOTHER WITH BOB, TED, AND HELEN



when I was old enough, I accompanied him. We usually went through the woods on the hill, where Father had constructed a number of swinging gates, Cuban style. We examined the trees, listened for song birds, enjoyed the distant views from the hilltops and the freshness of the early morning air. Father's horse was perfectly trained, for he stopped without guiding at all Father's favorite spots. We returned in time for a bath before breakfast, which for me was a cold plunge into a tin tub.

Breakfast was on the dot at quarter of eight and we were never allowed to be late. We had coffee, cereal, bacon and eggs, and sometimes sausages or kippered herring. In summer Mother made French dressing at the breakfast table, which was put on cucumbers and tomatoes brought in fresh from the garden.

During the afternoons we looked forward to Father's return from the office. He frequently came home early to play with us when he was not in Cuba. We would either go for another ride or make an inspection of the farm. Once in a while I was allowed to drive in his buggy when he went on business to the Aetna Mills or the Waltham Hospital. He drove a fast trotting horse and it was great fun to fly along the road under his expert guidance.

We children had a six o'clock supper at a small table in the dining room and were put to bed early. Warm baths on Wednesday and Saturday nights were considered quite sufficient. There was plenty of time for Father to tell us an animal story. Our favorites were tales of his beautiful white horse "Hero." This horse was the central figure of innumerable stories and we were never tired of hearing about him.

Every Tuesday evening Mr. Albert Van Raalte, violinist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra came for dinner. In the evening my mother played the piano and my aunt and Mr. Van Raalte played violins. We were fascinated by the strains of music which floated up to our bedrooms, for this was our first acquaintance with music.

There were two houses in Belmont where we children were free to go. One was my Aunt Emma Adams's house on Pleasant Street, where Aunt Emma and Uncle Ben lived with their son and daughter. The house was large with many bedrooms. In that

hospitable house relatives and friends were always welcome and the rooms were usually occupied. Beside my aunt's family only one person out of the large group stands out clearly in my memory. She was Aunt Rachel Raynor, Great-Grandmother Hartshorne's sister, who was over ninety. We climbed a long, straight walnut staircase to the second floor and paid our awed respects to a little old lady in lace cap and shawl who sat in her room in the low rocking chair. Her room, like the others in the house, was filled with pictures and ornaments typical of houses of the period. Our pleasantest times in this house were spent on the wide veranda overlooking Boston where the family gathered in summer.

Another house where we visited frequently was my Grandfather Atkins's house on Concord Avenue. Aunt Grace and Uncle Howell Reed lived in this house from May to November, returning to their Boston home for the winter. The house was dark and gloomy, but my aunt and uncle didn't seem to mind, for they lived mostly on the wide porch where the uninterrupted view of the city by day and the lights by night was an unending source of joy to them.

There was a toy closet in the library which had a woody smell all its own and sometimes a whiff of that strange odor brings back memories of my childish delight in the old toys kept there so carefully. They belonged to my father and aunts and were of the 1850 period. There were, among other things, a walking doll which wound with a key, a barnyard filled with feathered hens, an old country store, and a kaleidoscope. On the upper shelf was a gorgeous doll dressed in an embroidered silk dress with a bustle and train. I mention these toys as I have them today put away in a closet of my own for my grandchildren.

At the top of the house above the roof was a cupola with eight windows looking out in all directions. This cupola was built by Captain Homer, the original owner, so that he could get a glimpse of the ocean beyond Boston. A winding staircase led above the roof to the fascinating hideout where as little children we felt we were quite out of the world.

I must say a few words about my aunt and uncle, because they were a charming product of old New England. They were perhaps



a bit narrow and rigid in their views, but so good and kind to everyone. They had no children of their own and enjoyed having us in their house. Once a week we went to supper with them and I remember among other things we always had cold tongue and cracked co-coa. After supper Uncle Howell read carefully chosen jokes and stories from the Unitarian magazine, the *Christian Register*. Uncle Howell was very dramatic in everything he did and a neighbor came running to my mother one day saying that a man was gesticulating wildly under a tree on the hilltop and that he must have escaped from the Insane Asylum. "Nonsense," said Mother, "that is just Howell practicing for his speech tonight." Uncle Howell wrote a book about his experiences in the \*Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. He never would allow any of us children to read it as he considered it too harrowing. He also wrote a book about Elisha Atkins and I am indebted to him for information about my grandfather.

Many interesting people came to see the Reeds. My uncle and aunt were among the first supporters of the Grenfell Mission, and before his marriage Dr. Grenfell always stayed in their house when he came to Boston. I remember the visit of an East Indian, Mr. Mozumdah, with flowing beard, turban and robes, who was connected with the Unitarian church in India. Then there was a colored man who was a scholar of note, and an Indian girl from Oklahoma, and others. My uncle and aunt gave a helping hand to many people and everyone enjoyed visiting in their home. Our horizon was widened by listening to the visitors' stories.

In 1892 my parents had bought the Hollingsworth farm across the street. The farm, known as Holiday Farm, was an elaborate place. It had a dwelling house, farmhouse, barn for horses with a bowling alley on the side, and a carriage house with a billiard room connected with it. Then there was a large red cow barn housing seven cows, and a small milk house. In front of the cow barn a pond for ducks was fed by a brook which ran through the pastures.

John Leonard, my father's head man, superintended the farm,

\* Forerunner of the Red Cross.



FATHER



the stables, the gardens, and even the family. John had come to my father fresh from Ireland in 1880. He landed in Boston and on leaving the boat walked into the country looking for work. He met Father on the Waltham road and Father, liking the young man's looks, gave him a job on his Trapelo Road farm. When Father was married, he sold his little farm and brought John to Belmont. John was waiting at the house to greet my parents when they returned from their wedding journey. He remained with our family seventy-two years.

John rose to be an important man in the Town. Once when he and Mother were both running for the office of Town Meeting Members, they far outstripped the other candidates in the numbers of votes they received. John topped the list, with Mother a close second. For many years John was Chief of the Belmont Fire Department, then composed mostly of volunteers. Sometimes the fire bell rang when he was driving my grandmother and she was delighted to race to the fire, where she had a good view from her carriage of the activities of the fire fighters.

The fire in our house was the big event of our childhood. I was about six years old at the time. One icy night in the middle of winter, when Father was in Cuba, my mother discovered smoke in the hall. She summoned John Leonard and the Fire Department. Most of the neighborhood arrived too, for a fire in those days was a social event. No one was particularly scared, and all, including the Fire Department and the neighbors thoroughly enjoyed the occasion. The neighbors carried the furniture out into the snow, although the family were still inside the house. The water was shut off, and during the fire, Rosa, the cook, got water from the fire hose and made coffee on her stove for all the firemen. A stout man, member of the Volunteer Fire Department, arrived from Brighton St. over a mile away. Having run the whole distance, he had a heart attack on the front hall sofa, where he was cared for by Mother. A town doctor, somewhat addicted to alcohol, arrived on the scene and immediately prescribed whiskey for the patient, to the amusement of everyone present. The fire was finally put out after burning a big hole in the center of the house. We three children were terrified of the big

black hole and moved our beds into our mother's room, where we slept until the damage was repaired.

Father had many horses and they occupied much of his time and interest. He taught me to ride a pony at the age of two, strapped into a little basket saddle. Our two ponies and two saddle horses were kept in the barn on our side of the street. In this barn were also a pair of horses of matching color for station trips and general driving, and another horse for my mother's special use. In the big barn across the street we had the work horses, Tom and Jerry, another matching pair, and the colts, Elsie and Belle. My father raised these colts, but they were never properly broken and were continually running away.

I must say a word about our carriages, for they occupied such a large place in my early life. We were constantly having accidents with the carriages, which added to the joy and excitement of living. We always had one or two green Irishmen fresh from the "Old Country," and one of my vivid recollections is of Pat, the Irish coachman, driving too fast around the corner of our driveway and turning the station wagon, that didn't "cut under" completely over on its side. Pat and I landed in a heap on the grass with no damage to either of us. Next, Aunt Rita and my brother Bob were run away with by the liveliest of the pairs hitched to the open carriage, which my father was driving. He managed to slow the horses down while my aunt leaped out with my brother Bob in her arms, thereby saving his life, as we children thought. My mother drove a phaeton, a low slung affair with the horse about three feet in front of the dashboard. One afternoon near Adams Store in Belmont Centre the breeching broke, the horse turned completely around in the shafts, and Mother found herself gazing into the horse's face. Nothing daunted, she jumped out, unfastened the harness, and leaving the carriage behind she led the horse home.

Mother never looked where she was going when she was driving and was constantly talking to someone on the sidewalk or stopping on the hill to pick up a neighbor. One day while driving my grandmother and Aunt Emma Adams in the station wagon, she suddenly found herself flat on her stomach in the middle of the road, still



clinging to the reins. Mother had been talking with her mother and aunt on the back seat when the wagon hit a post. The horse kept on going, while Mother went right out over the dashboard, leaving her mother and aunt behind in a horseless vehicle.

We had another carriage that was the last word in elegance. It was called a brougham and was upholstered in leather and had silk shades at the windows. To make it ride more comfortably it was slung between the front and back wheels of the carriage body, which caused a rolling, swaying motion. How I hated that brougham, for it made me sick to ride in it, and I can smell even now that awful close leathery smell of its dark interior. The only pleasant thing about it was snapping the curtains up and down. One day Mother had to go to a funeral and a wedding at almost the same time. The funeral came first and she went in a black dress. John Leonard was on the box, and when he pulled up at the wedding some twenty minutes later, to his utter amazement, she stepped out in a gay wedding dress. Thanks to the curtains she had changed on the way.

Now I come to the most spectacular vehicle of all, the tallyho, and as its use came to an end so many years ago, I just can remember it. It was my father's pride and joy to handle the four horses. The family and a few neighbors sat in the middle seats and I remember sitting in the rear seat, where John Leonard allowed me to share his duties of blowing the horn.

In the house Mother spent hours at her desk in the living room where she attended to a large correspondence and answered many telephone calls. She was so good and kind that many people turned to her in time of trouble. I remember the elaborate arrangements she used to make to get people to the doctor or into the Waltham Hospital. Nothing was too much for her to do if it would help other people and she didn't hesitate to ask favors if they were for someone else. Sometimes her calls were on Belmont affairs, for she was keenly interested in politics and in the welfare of the town.

Mother felt that our house and grounds should be useful so they were frequently used for town benefits. One day there was a church fair on the lawn which included a second-hand table. I saw Father, who patiently endured such occasions, watching this



table with a twinkle in his eye. After the fair was over, Mother missed all her hats. Father, who had no enthusiasm for Mother's hats, had sold them at the rummage table.

Our music room and piano were also used by groups. One night while at dinner, a recent arrival from Cuba was startled by an awful noise issuing from the music room. Mother had forgotten to warn him that she had loaned the room to an amateur brass band from Watertown which was practicing for the evening.

On Sunday we children had to go to church with the family. One morning during the service Mother heard a giggle from the rear pew and looked around just in time to see my brother Ted flip a coin from the end of his nose into the contribution box.

When automobiles began to take the place of carriages, my parents bought a car. The horses were given up one by one and Father bought Mother a Model T Ford to take the place of her phaeton. Mother got into as much trouble with her car as she had with her horse and carriage. As her Ford grew older it used to back fire and her arrival was heralded by a series of loud reports. One day on the hill I found Mother stalled in a very steep place. She had her foot on the brake, but she couldn't let go because the emergency brake wouldn't work. Father was sitting quietly on the back seat. Thinking he didn't realize his dangerous position, I opened the rear door and asked him why he didn't get out. "In times of danger," he said, "I like to be near your mother." We finally got the car backed down and they went happily on their way. I tell these stories about my mother for she enjoyed all these little incidents as much as we did and got a lot of fun out of it all.

My brother Bob was five years older than I. He went to boarding school at an early age and Ted and I were left at home to play together. Ted was full of ingenious ideas and kept the family in a constant dither, and me in a constant state of laughter. He was always arriving home with animals. Sometimes it was a skunk he had trapped, sometimes a fox or a muskrat. I remember so well balancing on the top of a ladder and holding a bag over a squirrel hole in a nut tree while Ted and a gang of boys lit a fire at the bottom inside the trunk. Up came a whole bunch of squirrels and jumped into

the bag. I was so frightened that I nearly fell off the ladder. Most of them got away but two were left squirming in the bag. The squirrels were of very different character, one just an ordinary squirrel of little personality, but the other was an individualist named Grumpy Growler. He lived while not eating, in my brother's pocket, with his tail dangling out, and was usually brought forth at the dining room table where he growled in a delightful manner, which did not charm my mother.

As we grew up Ted and I continued to be the best of friends. When he went to college he had the house filled with boys on week ends and always included me in his activities. Ted was killed in 1923 and I have never ceased to miss him. To him I owed the fun and gaiety of my girlhood, and through him I met my husband, who has brought so much interest and happiness into my life.

It is time to close my story of past generations and look to the future. The picture of our children and grandchildren is on the opposite page. I hope they may have pleasure in reading the family history and that they may find that family possessions have an added interest.



### THE CLAFLIN FAMILY IN 1954

*Standing:* Tim Claflin, Kitty Weeks, John Spring, Bill Claflin, John Weeks. *Middle row:* Anne Claflin Helen Spring, H.A.C., W.H.C., Nancy Claflin, Kitty Weeks. *In Laps:* Billie Spring, Sinnie Weeks, Neddie Claflin. *Front row:* Nita Spring, Susie Spring, Johnnie Weeks, Prennie Claflin, Johnnie Spring, Marnie Weeks, Jody Claflin, David Weeks.

*Not in picture:* Rebecca Claflin and Stephen Weeks.