



John and Pinky Rivers get ready for the 1949 Fourth of July parade in their 1903 Orient. In the background is the old Proctor Boat Shop.

Photo courtesy of Beverly Rivers Engelhart

A History Mystery

By Lloyd M. Perreault
For the Beacon

As I remember, the automobile pictured was a 1903 Orient. It had an oak body and frame with buggy-type bow springs. Steering was with a tiller, and it was powered by a single cylinder gas engine.

The transmission was two circular built-up leather wheels, one small and one large. Forward progress was made by using a lever between the occupants that caused the two wheels to engage. The larger wheel, mounted on the engine, was permanent. The smaller wheel moved in and out to vary the speed. Neutral position did not allow the wheels to touch.

To start the engine, it had to be cranked until it got some momentum, and then the magneto was engaged to cause a spark for ignition. It had hard rubber tires like those found on horse buggies.

The automobile was refinished and was at Proctor Academy for some time. Since the occupants in the photo are John and Pinky Rivers, it can be assumed that John, who operated the Proctor Boat Building Shop, had a hand in the restoration. The building on the right side of the photo is the old Proctor Boat Shop.

I remember seeing the automobile in another parade – I don't remember the year. At that time I believe that it was driven by Ralph Chaffee's son-in-law and his daughter.

In a conversation with Beverly Rivers Engelhart at the Andover High School reunion I learned that the automobile was owned at one point by a member of the Lauridsen family of New London.

Do you have a photo or other artifact of Andover's past that has some mystery about it? Please contact the Beacon so we can share the mystery with our readers...and maybe solve it!

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Reminiscence

Grace Chaffee: School Days In Andover

Grace Chaffee, born in 1900, was interviewed by Barbara Upton for the Andover Historical Society at her home on Beech Hill on April 25, 1985. The interview was transcribed by Jeanne Barrett and excerpted for the Beacon by Suzy Norris.

Grace Chaffee: My Grandfather and Grandmother Eastman came to East Andover about the same time as my Grandfather Flanders. When they first lived here, they lived over on what we call Cemetery Corner now. They lived there for about two years and then my grandfather bought a place and the land where Louise Wood lives today... My grandfather was a stone mason, and in the winter he trained oxen. The barn cellar on both the Batchelder Farm and the Dunn Farm, which was then known as the Philbrick Farm, were built by my grandfather and his brother...

The four of us graduated from the eighth grade together, and Olive boarded up in Andover, and John, Claribel, and I drove a horse; really I think we pushed the old horse up there.

The boys played football so the girls, the three of us, would come home together, and we'd get part way down on the Plains, and the boys would overtake us... and their horse was a real trotter, so they trotted right by and waved to us, and how we keep pushing the poor old horse! We had a lot of fun just the same...

We drove... until Christmas, and then it was getting too cold, so after that Claribel and I boarded in Andover, and John and Charles boarded... and went back and forth on the train... nights and mornings.

That was called the Peanut, and Mr. Frau used to laugh, he was the Latin teacher, he used to say the Peanut was Latin for "almost the last" or "next to the last," so that was why the train was called the Peanut...

After graduating from Proctor I went to UNH for four years, and then I taught school for four years in Weare.

Barbara Upton: How did you get back and forth to the University?

GC: I went on the train to Manchester, and then we'd have to trade cars there and go to Rockingham Junction. Then from Rockingham Junction we'd have to change again, take the Boston-to-Portland. We had a good time going, because lots wouldn't have seats, and we'd sit on our suitcases in the aisle. Probably the rest of the people didn't enjoy it as much as we did...

[Weare] was just a small school. There were just three teachers, and we alternated the courses... so that in the four years they got their regular four courses and we divided up the subjects to be taught.

We were in the upstairs over the Town Hall. We had one large main room, then there was a kitchen, a small classroom, and then another small room which the principal used...

The floor was very cold downstairs; it was unheated, and we had a large heater in one of the rooms and then smaller ones to keep it. We got along, but we had cold feet for a year.

BU: Where did you meet [your future husband] Ralph?

GC: I met Ralph after he came up to New Hampshire to be farm manager in October of 1924. It was probably the next summer before I met him.

He came to... be farm manager there at Halcyon Hills for Mr. Richardson... Ralph and I lived the first year where John Jurta lives now, and then for the next nine years we lived at Halcyon Hills. Mr. Richardson was a very fine person. It was with his backing that the 4-H Beef Club was started in New Hampshire...

After Mr. Richardson decided to sell the farm, Ralph and I bought it and we stayed there from October '33 to April '37, and we had it as a dairy farm then... Then we went to Maplecrest [on Chase Hill Road], which was my old home...

BU: When did [Ralph] decide to write the [Andover] town history?

GC: He was always interested in history... and as he was working around the town he'd meet people, and he learned a lot of history that way, and he became quite fascinated by it, so when he retired in 1963... he had plenty of time to write... and he enjoyed it.

He wrote several articles that were printed in the Franklin paper... He was a trustee of the Franklin Hospital and the Andover Rescue Squad's secretary/treasurer... He was also on the Batchelder Library Building Committee... He was a member of the Fire Department and secretary/treasurer...

He enjoyed Andover and his association as he met friends, and he enjoyed meeting them always. I think he learned a great deal more than he realized when he was selectman, because he got appointed and learned a lot of the people and their ideas and they told him a lot of things years back which were fascinating.

You are invited to meet
Sir Tom of Warwick
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